



Class PZ 3

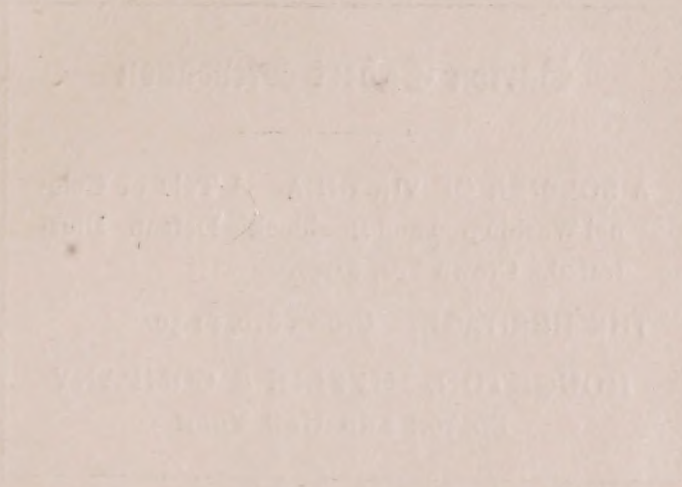
Book S 847 He

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

290

934



Burton Egbert Stebensen

A SOLDIER OF VIRGINIA. A Tale of Colonel Washington and Braddock's Defeat. Illustrated. Crown 8vo, \$1.50.

THE HERITAGE. Crown 8vo, \$1.50.

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

THE HERITAGE

A STORY OF DEFEAT AND VICTORY

BY

BURTON EGBERT STEVENSON

[illegible]

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1902

THE LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS,
TWO COPIES RECEIVED
SEP. 10 1902
COPYRIGHT ENTRY
Aug. 30. 1902
CLASS *aXXc*. No.
40660
COPY B.

Published October, 1902

[illegible]

TO
THE MEMORY OF
THOSE FEARLESS MEN AND WOMEN
WHO BRAVED THE PERILS OF THE WILDERNESS
AND WON IT FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S
HERITAGE

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. WHICH BEGINS AT THE BEGINNING . . .	1
II. THE WAR COMES TO VIRGINIA . . .	8
III. WE ENTERTAIN THE ENEMY . . .	17
IV. I WITNESS A STIRRING SIGHT . . .	27
V. IN WHICH A SOLDIER COMES HOME AGAIN .	37
VI. I DINE IN DISTINGUISHED COMPANY . .	44
VII. THE STORY OF A SCAR . . .	57
VIII. ENTER SIMON P. ALLEN . . .	65
IX. WE ARE TAKEN CAPTIVE . . .	75
X. MISTRESS RUTH SINGS US A SONG . . .	89
XI. WE FIND AN ALLY . . .	96
XII. OUR ALLY WINS OUR BATTLE . . .	104
XIII. NEW FRIENDS . . .	114
XIV. I PLAY THE FOOL . . .	128
XV. WESTWARD HO! . . .	140
XVI. ANOTHER PARTING . . .	148
XVII. THE PEACE PIPE GOES OUT . . .	161
XVIII. DISILLUSION . . .	173
XIX. A LABOR FOR HERCULES . . .	184
XX. A SECOND BRADDOCK . . .	197
XXI. AWAKENING . . .	203
XXII. I FIND A FRIEND . . .	211
XXIII. OPPORTUNITY . . .	224
XXIV. OLD FRIENDS AND NEW . . .	234
XXV. BATTLE . . .	244
XXVI. AN EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES . . .	254
XXVII. VENGEANCE . . .	267
XXVIII. WE START ON A LONG JOURNEY. . .	275

XXIX. I COME TO PHILADELPHIA	283
XXX. MEETING	293
XXXI. "JOURNEYS END"	303
XXXII. . . . "IN LOVERS MEETING"	316
XXXIII. AND LAST	321

THE HERITAGE

CHAPTER I

WHICH BEGINS AT THE BEGINNING

IN my father's journal have I read often the story of that day, till it seems almost a memory of my own. Sunday it was, and the weather cold and bleak, with no promise in it, yet, of spring. Seven horses were hitched to the long rack beside the house, and near by stood a gig, which, by a certain sleek smugness, bespoke the doctor. Three negro grooms, in as many liveries, were gulping rum and wide-mouthed gossip in the kitchen; while their masters, in the library, also partook of spirits, though of a choicer brand.

John Randolph had boated across from Cawson's, and taken horse at Westover; his cousin, the king's attorney, had ridden down from Turkey Island, bringing his young son, Edmund, with him; and Mr. Harrison had come up from Berkeley, at some sacrifice to himself, to honor this occasion with his presence, and prove himself, as always, the good neighbor. My father completed the group, which was quite a family party, but there was something amiss in the atmosphere — some

cloud which neither sweet-scented nor Jamaica could dispel — some nettle which left them all distraught and ill at ease, and my father most of all. He joined at random in their talk; he paced nervously up and down the room, with hands gripped behind him, pausing every instant with ears astrain to catch some sound from without.

His guests seemed to understand and pardon his uneasiness. Mr. Harrison stood at the window, drumming absently upon the pane, and staring out across the fields, thinking, perhaps, of the like ordeal which he was soon to face. The others were grouped before the fire, with legs outstretched to the grateful blaze, gazing dreamily at the flames through the cloud of smoke which arose from three long-stemmed pipes. The talk faltered and died away; the barking of a dog far off on the river bank came with surprising clearness through the moisture-laden air; and a moment later, another sound — the thud, thud of a horse's hoofs, drawing rapidly nearer, and coming at last to a sudden stop beside the house. Mr. Harrison, looking from the window, saw a tall man swing himself lightly from the saddle, throw his bridle to the expectant boy, and run up the steps to the door.

“Chris!” called a voice. “Chris!” and they turned to see him standing on the threshold.

My father went to him as a child to its mother.

“Dear uncle!” he cried. “How kind of you to come!”

"Kind! Pouf! I was coming to-morrow anyway, but I chanced to be at the Charles when your man came for Price. He told me what was toward, so I got to horse at once."

"That was like you," and my father held out his hands. "You would pause at no trouble, dear sir, I know well, to do a kindness."

The other caught the extended hands in his left one, for his right was missing, and gave them a warm, close clasp.

"And how goes it?" he asked. "Is all well?"

"Well — yes. Well as can be, I suppose. But Price looks on in such a hideous, complacent way. Damn him! I felt like kicking him out the door!"

The elder man looked down with warm sympathy into the working face before him.

"I know," he said. "I know. It is a time of trial no less for us, as I am to prove for myself ere-long. You have heard?"

My father nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Your wife has written to mine."

"She is very happy," went on the other simply, but with shining eyes. "It has come to us after long years of waiting. I see you have other guests," he added gently, recalling the shaken man before him to his duties.

My father flushed, and pulled himself together with an effort.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," he said. "I can but plead my anxiety in excuse for my forgetfulness."

I think you know them all, Colonel Stewart. I am sure they all know you."

"The Randolphs I know," and he shook hands with them as he spoke. "It was kind of you to show your interest thus. But," and he turned his eyes upon the other, who stood by the window, "yonder gentleman I have not met, though I'll wager I could call his name."

"Harrison, of Berkeley," — and he came forward quickly, with hand outstretched, — "and proud, indeed, to know you, Colonel Stewart."

"The honor is mine, sir. I have often wished to meet you, but some unlucky chance has kept us apart. I knew your father well," he added, "and met him often at Williamsburg. I was a mere boy then, and he was very kind to me, as he was to every one. I cannot tell you how the news of his death shocked me."

A sudden cloud descended upon Mr. Harrison's face. In truth, I think he never quite recovered from the horror of that disaster, which, in the flash of a lightning-stroke, deprived him of his father and two sisters, and left him heir to the great estate, though yet almost a boy.

"I thank you, sir," he said, in a low voice. "My father's memory is very dear to me;" but before he could say more, the door was softly opened.

"Price!" cried my father, springing forward.

Price went in and softly closed the door behind him.

"It is over," he said calmly, with a professional

indifference perhaps somewhat assumed. "How are you, my dear sir?" he added, turning to Colonel Stewart. "Had I known you were coming over, I'd have placed half the seat of my gig at your service."

But my father had sunk down upon a chair, dazed by the doctor's words.

"Over!" he murmured to himself. "Over!" and a cold perspiration broke out across his forehead.

"Yes, over," and the little red-faced doctor turned back to him with his bland smile. He was physician, let it be remembered, to much greater families than ours. "I congratulate you, sir. You are father to as fine a boy as I ever set eyes on!"

My father's face grew livid, and he brushed his hands across his eyes as though to clear away some mist that clouded them.

"Father! A boy!" he stammered.

It was Colonel Stewart who rose to the occasion. In two strides he was at the door, and a moment later returned, followed by the grinning major-domo, who must have foreseen the emergency and been prepared for it, for he bore aloft a tray, upon which a decanter and ring of glasses rattled.

"Fill 'em, Pomp!" he commanded. "Quick, you rascal!"

And the way Pomp filled those glasses was wonderful to see.

"Bumpers, gentlemen!" cried the colonel. "To

the health, happiness, and long life of the heir of Wyndham!"

The wine brought the color back to my father's cheeks, and he was on his feet again.

"I thank you, sirs," he began, so moved he spoke with difficulty. And then, as the sound of cheering came from without, he turned to the grinning negro. "Pomp," he said, "brew the biggest bowl of punch you can — plenty of rum, mind you — bring my people in and let them celebrate. God!" he added, as Pomp hurried away upon this merry errand, "to think it should be true! May I see her, doctor?"

"Not just yet, but soon — soon," and Price smiled again at his earnestness. "She will send for you."

"And she is safe?"

"Quite safe."

"And it is a boy?"

"Yes — a boy."

"Colonel Stewart," and my father turned to him suddenly, his eyes bright with tears, "it is all so sudden — so wonderful — even yet I can scarce believe it — my cup is so full to overflowing — that it has quite upset me — quite driven from my head the thing I wished to say. Margaret and I had both agreed that if it should be a boy, we would beg you to stand godfather to him, and to permit us to name him after you."

"With all my heart! Why, I love the boy already, Chris!"

"Another glass, gentlemen!" cried my father,

his face alight. "We drink, this time, to the health of Thomas Stewart Randolph, and may he be worthy of his name!"

A tap sounded at the door as the toast was drunk, and my father strode to it and flung it open.

"What is it, girl?" he asked, of the grinning wench who stood curtsying on the threshold. I think he feared some awakening, even yet.

"D' missus wants t' see y', suh," and the girl ducked her head again, with mouth from ear to ear. "Wants t' see y' mighty p'ticklah, I reckon, suh."

"I'm coming," and he paused only for one backward glance into the room. "Excuse me, gentlemen," he called, and an instant later was bounding up the stair to the room where the cause of all this commotion lay snugly in his mother's arm, quite indifferent to the love and joy which had heralded his coming.

CHAPTER II

THE WAR COMES TO VIRGINIA

FOR me, my life commences with my seventh New Year's day. Before that it is a blank. Of all those years I have no certain and definite recollection — yes, there is one: of my mother taking me with her to her room one afternoon, kneeling with me at the bedside, and bursting forth into such a storm of agonized prayer and weeping as to quite amaze me. I know now that she had just received a message from my father, who had marched away with the first muster of Virginia troops, and who wrote her that he was just recovered of a fever and escaped from the British lines at Charleston. That is for me the only glimmer of light in those eight years of darkness, crowded as they were with great events; but the tide of war had rolled northward from Virginia long before and left the little circle of my life peaceful and unclouded. What prayers went up from the women for the safety of the dear ones at the north, what agonies shook them at tidings of battle and rout, what anguish of waiting as the list of dead and missing came in month after month, piecemeal, harrowing in its very incompleteness, what a cloud of misery settled on them

as their cause went from bad to worse until it seemed lost hopelessly — of all this I was quite unconscious. But from the opening day of the year which saw America triumphant, my life lies spread before me clearly.

On the morning of that day, then, my mother and I journeyed in the family coach the few miles which separated us from Berkeley, to spend the day with the family there. Now Berkeley quite overshadowed our modest place at Wyndham in size and beauty and number of retainers, and I stared at it with all my eyes as we rumbled up the long avenue of tall Lombardy poplars, which led to the main entrance of the mansion-house, down the steps of which its kindly master was already descending to welcome us, with an agility surprising in so large a man.

“This is indeed kind of you, Mrs. Randolph,” he cried, as he threw open the coach-door before our man could reach it. “Come into the house and see my wife — she will be delighted. And I declare,” he went on, espying me in the corner as he helped her alight, “if there is n’t young Tom! Come here, sir.” He reached into the coach after me and swung me lightly to his broad shoulder, and in this state I entered Berkeley. “What a big fellow he is,” he added, as he put me down. “I would my son Henry had a little of his bone and tissue. Would you like to meet my son, sir?”

“That he would,” replied my mother heartily, seeing me tongue-tied, and so he bore me away, leaving the ladies to their gossip.

"We shall find him in the library," said my conductor. "He is always there," and there, indeed, we found him, stretched out in the great window-seat, his head propped in his hands, intent upon a book.

"Henry," said his father, "I have brought you a visitor, Master Thomas Randolph, of Wyndham."

"If you please, sir," I began, summoning all my courage, "I'm not called Thomas, but Stewart."

"Stewart, ay," and he nodded at me kindly. "You were named for a splendid gentleman, my boy. Harry, come and shake hands with your neighbor."

The boy swung himself to the floor, somewhat unwillingly I fancied, and I saw that though he was taller than I, he was not half so broad, and when I took his extended hand I found it a mere bunch of bones. Yet the scorn which was springing, boy-like, to my heart, was checked by a glance into his face, with its wide-open blue eyes and sensitive, slightly twisted mouth.

"I am happy to see you, sir," he said, with a dignity which makes me smile now I think of it, but which then impressed me as quite like his father.

"I'll have you called when dinner is ready, boys," said the latter, and so left us to ourselves.

For a moment we both stood in an embarrassed silence.

"What is it you were reading?" I asked at last, for want of something better.

"The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," and he got the book and brought it to me.

Now, though I knew my letters well enough and had made some brief essays at reading under my mother's guidance, I may as well confess that I had no love for books, but infinitely preferred idleness and the open air, and my companion saw from my helpless look at the page of print that it was quite beyond me.

"Shall I tell you about it?" he asked, and I nodded, with a new feeling of respect for him.

We climbed together upon the window-seat, and he began to tell me the fascinating tale, reading a bit here and there to give it greater vividness, notably the description of the wrecking of the ship and the landing of Crusoe upon his island.

"Just think," he said, "there he was on a desert island, all alone. No wonder he was frightened!"

"But what did he do?" I asked.

"You'll see," and he went on with the recital, while I listened, spell-bound. We were just fairly into it when the summons came to dinner.

"We will come straight back," said Harry, laying the book down carefully, face-open, to mark the place. "That is, if you care to."

"Of course I care to!" I protested, and we hurried away to have the meal over.

The picture of that dinner-table has never left me. Our worthy host sat at the table-head and

opposite him his wife, still justly reckoned one of the beauties of the colony. At his right was my mother, and at his left the Reverend James Ogilvie, a florid-faced, stately man, but lately come to Westover parish. A dozen others there were besides the children of the house, for Mr. Harrison ever practiced the hospitality proverbial with his family, even to improvidence and the injury of his estate. A merry dinner it was, with plenty of laughter to season it, though the talk left little impress on my mind, for I was deep with my neighbor in discussion of the wonderful story we had begun.

"The boys seem to be friends already," remarked Mr. Harrison, smiling at us over his wine-glass. "Truly, I shall be glad to see them intimate, madam, for Harry sticks too closely to the house. He needs the open air and your boy may drag him into it and away from his books."

"Henry seems more like to drag Stewart to them," answered my mother, laughing, "for which I shall not be sorry."

"Well, well, they may both profit by companionship. They are just at the right age, I think. Strange, is it not, how nearly the same age they are? My boy is but a day the younger, you remember."

The two mothers exchanged a glance of sympathy across the board.

"'Tis plain that Henry will be a scholar," said my mother. "He hath the look of one."

"And the intellect of one," added Tutor Ogilvie,

with some unction. "His progress in the classics is surprising, madam, for one so young."

"Dost wish to be a scholar, Hal?" questioned his father smilingly.

"No, sir," spoke up the boy.

"What then, my dear?"

"A soldier, sir," and there came a gleam in his eyes which contrasted strangely with his pale, thin face.

"A soldier!" cried his mother, aghast. "Nonsense, sir! By the time you are of age to wield a sword, I trust there will be no further need for soldiers in this country!"

"I say amen, Elizabeth," but the father looked at his boy with a touch of pride. "And yet, if his country need him, I trust he may not be found a laggard. And what would you be, Stewart?"

"A soldier, too, sir," I said, though I confess I had wasted little thought upon the subject.

"And who wilt thou fight, my boy?" asked Mrs. Harrison.

"The Indians," I answered, with a flash of inspiration. "I'll over the mountains and fight the Indians — if there be no British left!"

I can yet see the horrified look my mother turned upon me at these bloodthirsty words, while Mr. Harrison and the other gentlemen grew red with laughter; but their mirth was of a sudden interrupted, for the door was flung quickly back, and a man, not heeding the protestations of the hall-boy, strode into the room.

"Pardon, gentlemen," he said, looking about

the table with a quick glance, "but I bear news that will not brook delay. That damned traitor, Arnold, at the head of a force of Hessians and Tories, arrived at Hampton yesterday to scourge our coast, and perhaps come up the river. Be warned in time, sirs," and before any of us could draw breath, he had turned upon his heel and disappeared.

Our host was the first to get his wits.

"Sid!" he shouted to the hall-boy. "Sid, stop him! Bring him back! Damn it, will you have this house disgraced?" And while Sid sprang after the messenger, he turned apologetically to his wife. "Pardon me, my dear, but the man has ridden all night, mayhap, and that he should leave here without refreshment would be black infamy."

"Damn you, boy!" roared a voice in the hall, "what d'ye mean by locking the door? Open it, or I'll choke the key out of you!"

Mr. Harrison sprang laughing from the table.

"Come, sir," he said, entering the hall, "Sid has exceeded courtesy, perhaps; but you must take some refreshment ere leaving us — a glass of punch, if nothing more. 'T will delay you but a moment, and do you a world of good."

The gracious warmth of his manner was quite irresistible, and the courier permitted himself to be brought back into the room, where a great glass was brimmed for him in an instant. I saw that his eyes were red from riding in the wind, and when he raised his glass he could scarce hold it, so stiff and drawn were his fingers.

"I can tell you nothing more, gentlemen," he said, as he set it down with a sigh of satisfaction. "'Tis believed, however, that Arnold's aim is to take our stores at Richmond. You will see the need of haste. Good-day, sirs," — and he was gone again.

For a moment no one spoke. Each looked in his neighbor's face.

"So the war is come again to Virginia," said Mr. Harrison slowly at last, "and with Arnold at the head of the British. We must meet them as best we can, gentlemen. My place is with the governor at Richmond. Will any of you go with me?"

They rose as one man.

"One toast more!" cried Parson Ogilvie, who knew good wine when he tasted it, and was perhaps loath to leave this so abruptly. "To the American arms, success; to traitors, confusion!"

The toast was drunk, and they clattered from the room to don greatcoat and gauntlet, leaving us children breathless with excitement and the women sad enough. But Mr. Harrison was back in a moment to speak a comforting word.

"There is no danger as yet," he said, "nor can be for some days. Still, I think it would be well, Elizabeth, to put such things as you value in some secret place — advice I give you, also, Mrs. Randolph. When a traitor leads hireling soldiers to invade his country, the rules of honorable warfare are like to be forgot. Good-by, my dears," and the door closed behind him.

We crowded to the windows, women and children alike, to watch the little cavalcade spur away and to wave them adieu. Yet, as our coach rumbled after them, five minutes later, my chief thought was not of war, but was a regret for the book lying face downward, neglected, on the window-seat.

CHAPTER III

WE ENTERTAIN THE ENEMY

WE had not long to wait for certain tidings of danger. Two days later, Mr. Harrison himself rode up to Wyndham to tell us that Arnold's ships had started up the James and that there could be doubt no longer that his aim was Richmond and our munitions there.

"And I need not tell you, my dear madam," he added, "that you may incur some peril — certainly much unpleasantness — by remaining here at Wyndham. Your cousin, St. George Tucker, is sending his wife and children up the Appomattox to his place at Bizarre, and he has asked me to offer asylum there to you and your boy."

My mother looked at him with gleaming eyes, from all the dignity of her five feet two.

"The invitation was extended to your family, also, I suppose, sir?" she inquired.

"Why, yes — Tucker was so kind."

"And I dare say Mrs. Harrison has already started?" she asked with withering irony.

The good man laughed as he looked at her with a somewhat sheepish countenance.

"Well, no," he said. "I tried to start Elizabeth and the children off this morning — had the

coach around to the door, indeed — when she sent me to the right-about. We Virginia husbands have come to a sad pass, Mrs. Randolph — we are but poor henpecked creatures.”

“Humph!” retorted my mother, “’t is only when you try to make us women cowards that we assert ourselves. Run away from the British, indeed! When will they be here, sir?”

“In three days at the utmost,” and he grew suddenly grave again. “Really, madam, I believe it will be rash for you to stay. I hope yet to bring Elizabeth to reason. There may be no actual danger, but there is much risk of insult, and every man of us is needed at the capital.”

“Go, sir!” cried my mother with shining eyes. “I regret only that I have no one to send with you. Believe me, we Virginia women know how to guard ourselves from insult!”

But I, who had been standing by with ears alert, was fairly bursting with indignation. Plainly they had forgotten me.

“I will guard you, mother!” I cried, with legs very far apart and chest well out, as I had seen our hostler stand sometimes, — an attitude which I thought very admirable and striking.

Mr. Harrison would have burst out laughing, I think, but that there was something in my mother’s face as she bent over me which gave him pause.

“Of course you will, Stewart,” she said, and when our visitor took his leave a moment later, to spur to the aid of our distracted Mr. Jefferson, he shook hands with me most kindly.

We soon had news of the enemy's advance, for Pomp, being sent over next day to Berkeley, brought back the tidings that Arnold's fleet had reached Jamestown, and after capturing a small battery at Hood's Point, had proceeded up the river. They reached Westover the next afternoon and there chose to disembark, to the hot shame of the Widow Byrd, who was thus forced to entertain her renegade cousin and the other British officers; while their men, who deemed all patriot property fair spoil, left a mark on the great plantation which even the kindly hand of years could not wholly wipe away. At dawn the invaders formed in column and started westward along the road to Richmond. Luckily, Mr. Harrison's mansion-house stood back among its grove of poplars some distance from the road and so escaped pillage, save for the depredations of a rabble of scoundrelly hangers-on.

But we were not so fortunate. Night was just falling when there came a clatter of horses' hoofs and rattle of arms along the road, and peering through the window I saw a dozen officers in brilliant uniforms pull their horses to a stop, dismount, and come stalking to the door, while two orderlies led the horses away toward the stables. Ere I could turn, almost, they had thrown back the door and come crowding into the room. My mother rose from her chair with blazing eyes.

"I am honored!" she began, and stopped, looking from one to another in a way that brought the red blood to more than one cheek.

"Indeed you are, madam," laughed the foremost of the invaders, a young fellow with fair hair and a pleasant face. "You are honored by the presence of distinguished company to-night. Permit me to present myself as Colonel Simcoe, of the Queen's Rangers," and he saluted her most gracefully. "These are my fellow officers. Shall I present them also?"

"I prefer to choose my own acquaintances, sir," answered my mother tartly, "and shall certainly not choose them among tyrants or traitors!"

"As you please, madam," said Colonel Simcoe lightly, "only you must choose us as guests to-night. From that, I fear, there is no escape. Our men are encamped on a creek above here — its name — its name" —

"Four Mile," I piped up, for the glory of his appearance had already dispelled much of my hatred for the British.

"Stewart!" cried my mother.

"Ah, yes, thank you; Four Mile," smiled the colonel, "and as this is the only house near by, here we must stay this night. We shall want dinner, beds, and breakfast, madam, and forage for our horses. I trust all this will be forthcoming without undue delay."

"It had better be!" growled one of the men behind the speaker. "You waste words, colonel."

Simcoe waved his hand to silence him.

"Permit me to conduct this business," he said sharply. "What say you, madam?"

My mother saw the folly of resistance.

"It shall be as you wish," she said. "Of course I have my opinion of cowards who war on women!"

"'Tis not a pleasant warfare, believe me, madam," responded Simcoe dryly.

"I say, Jack, don't forget me," drawled the man behind him.

"Oh, yes," said Simcoe. "One thing more, madam. My friend Johnston, here, is cursed with a weak stomach and would like a dish of tea."

It was a spark applied to the magazine.

"Tea, sir!" flamed my mother, so hotly that the gallant colonel gave back a step before her. "You insult me! There has been no tea in this house for six years! We be patriots, sir!"

"No matter, Jack," laughed Johnston. "I dare say I can get along without it."

"I dare say, sir!" retorted my mother, and forgetting me in the excitement of the moment, she sailed out of the room. I was not sorry to be left, and tucked myself away behind the window-seat, where I could see what passed without being myself too conspicuous.

They piled their accoutrements in one corner, stretched their arms and legs like men cramped with long sitting, and crowded about the fire. I feasted my eyes on their red uniforms and gold lace and bright buttons, and thought what a fine thing it was to be a soldier.

"The general should be here soon," observed Johnston. "What think you of him, Jack?"

But Simcoe merely shrugged his shoulders.

"Have you observed him, Jack?" the other persisted. "How he eats his heart out?"

Simcoe glanced at him.

"Well?"

"He seems most at home among our Tory friends."

"Yes. 'Pares cum paribus' — remember your Cicero, sir."

The other laughed this time, but checked himself of a sudden, as the door opened again, to admit a very haughty gentleman followed by three or four others. Of only medium height, but holding himself erect to every inch of it; thick-set and muscular, with florid face, his eyes looked fiercely forth from under heavy brows, as though in challenge, while his lips closed tightly above a long, projecting chin, bespeaking spirit, obstinacy and temper.

"Well, gentlemen, so you have found quarters?" he remarked, laying aside hat and gloves. "I trust dinner will be soon served?"

"'T is an even chance," laughed Simcoe. "The lady of the house turned up her nose at our red coats."

"Well," said Arnold sharply, "surely we may compel obedience!"

"I think we shall have dinner, sir," answered Simcoe, with just a trace of color in his face.

Arnold grunted and sat down before the fire, stretching out his hands to the blaze.

"Do not make a virtue of leniency, Colonel

Simcoe," he said. "'Tis always mistaken for cowardice."

Simcoe shut his lips tight together and turned away without replying. I saw how the others, save two or three, drew back into the corners of the room and talked together there in lowered tones. The minutes passed and the man before the fire seemed sunk in reverie, until at last the door was opened again and an officer entered and saluted him.

"We have a prisoner, General Arnold," he said.

"Ha — a prisoner — good!" cried Arnold, coming suddenly to life. "Where was he taken?"

"At the back of the garden here, sir, with some three or four others. They seemed to be reconnoitring the house. He is a captain, I think, in the rebel army."

For a moment Arnold said nothing, but sat looking into the fire with knitted brows.

"Bring him in," he said at last. "We have some questions to ask him," and in a moment the prisoner stood before him.

I had never seen the man, and in my childish eyes his faded uniform contrasted sadly with the brilliant trappings of the others. Yet he stood there with head erect, and it was Arnold's eyes that grew unsteady first.

"So," said the latter, "you have fallen into our hands, it seems, Captain" —

"Simms," said the other. "I have no reason to be ashamed of *my* name, I assure you."

"You are fortunate!" sneered Arnold, eying him darkly.

The prisoner merely looked at him with steady gaze. In one corner of the room, I saw Simcoe and his friend smiling together.

"What force has Jefferson gathered to oppose us?" asked Arnold at last.

Simms pressed his lips more tightly together, and his questioner's face began to darken ominously.

"I would advise you to answer, my man," he said, between his teeth. "'T will be the easiest way. What murderous scheme brought you to this house?"

"'T was no murderous one," replied the other calmly. "We wished merely to take a prisoner."

"A prisoner?" repeated the general, looking at him.

"Yes, a prisoner — a damned traitor by the name of Arnold."

For an instant the figures in the room seemed graven in stone. Arnold's hand quivered on his hilt, and I held my breath as I looked for him to cut the other down. Instead, he gave a short and bitter laugh.

"And do you know him?" he asked.

"Oh, quite well," Simms answered coolly. "I was a private with him in Canada, ere he turned traitor. I would have gone to death gladly for him then."

"And what would you have done with him had

you captured him?" asked Arnold, his lips trembling strangely.

"We would have cut off the leg that was wounded at Quebec and Saratoga," said the prisoner slowly, "and buried it with the honors of war. The rest of him we would have hanged on the highest gibbet in Virginia."

Again was Arnold's hand a-quiver, but he controlled himself by a mighty effort and even achieved a smile.

"You have a ready tongue, my man," he said hoarsely, — "a ready tongue. See that it does not peril your head, which is already in some danger. Take him away," he added to his aide. "Put a guard over him and the others. We will deal with them in the morning."

The faded uniform vanished through the doorway, and Arnold fell again to gazing at the fire, while the others whispered behind him. His face seemed of a sudden old and gray, his mouth twitched from moment to moment, and he passed his hand once or twice before his eyes, like a man suffering. At last Pomp shuffled into the room to announce that dinner was ready, and as they clattered away to table the old rascal, who had stopped behind to snuff the candles, espied me in my corner and bore me off, protesting violently, to my mother. He came up to us again presently with a message from the general, asking her to grace their meal, and though I hoped she would accept and take me with her, she returned a curt refusal. Our food was brought up to us, after which she

cautioned Pomp to stay without upon the threshold, and bolted the door forthwith.

She made but a pretense of eating, and as soon as I had finished, blew out the candle and put me to bed. She knelt by the bedside and folded her arms about me and pressed her face down to mine. I kissed her sleepily and closed my eyes, not doubting that she was coming to bed also, but when I started awake, far in the night, disturbed by I know not what, I found her still sobbing softly on my pillow.

CHAPTER IV

I WITNESS A STIRRING SIGHT

As I lay there looking at her, there came a sudden burst of shouting from the garden, followed by a dozen musket shots. We sprang together to the window, but could see little. Here and there a dying camp-fire gleamed fitfully through the night, but the moon had sunk behind the trees an hour since and left a world of shadows.

"What can it be?" whispered my mother. "An attack? Yet Mr. Jefferson would hardly dare."

She peered a moment longer out into the night, then went to the door and softly called to Pomp.

"What is it, Pomp?" she asked, as his voice responded.

"D' know, missus; I'll go fin' out," he said, and shuffled away along the hall.

The confusion without seemed to have subsided, but we could hear men moving noisily about in the rooms below, and presently there came a step up the corridor quite different from Pomp's expected shuffle, and, in a moment, a knocking at the door.

"Who is it?" demanded my mother.

"'Tis Simcoe, madam," responded the colonel's hearty voice. "We must be moving early and

the general requests that breakfast be served at once."

"I will attend to it, sir," she said curtly, and when she had heard his footsteps move away, she opened the door.

"Dress yourself as quickly as you can, Stewart," she commanded, "and come down to me in the kitchen. You will have to eat your breakfast there."

I wasted little time over my toilet, and hurried down the stair as fast as my legs would carry me. At the foot, I ran plump into Colonel Simcoe.

"Why, hello, youngster," said he, stooping and picking me up. "You're abroad early."

"I thought I heard fighting, sir," I said. "Did our men attack you?"

"They are no such fools," he laughed. "'Twas only some prisoners escaping."

"Those that were taken last night, sir?"

"Ay — four of them."

"Oh, but I am glad!" I cried, and clapped my hands.

He looked at me queerly for a moment.

"Well, you're a bold little devil," he said at last. "I should like to see you say that to the general! But I'm not half sorry myself," he added, and set me down. "There, run along to your mother, sir, before you get into further mischief."

I went to the kitchen dutifully enough, but mother was busy, and the temptation to see what a real army was like became quite irresistible.

Dawn was just breaking as I stole from the house, and in the first moment after I had left it, I had a great fright, for a big, burly, bewhiskered officer came clattering along the road, with four or five men after him, and the way they reeled in their saddles was quite frightful to see. He caught sight of me staring there at the roadside, and reining his horse toward me, lashed at me savagely with his whip, cursing fearfully the while, but I scuttled behind a tree, and so escaped the blow. I was certain he would come back after me, but after an instant's hesitation, he spurred on toward the house.

I stopped in uncertainty. Should I go on — should I go back? I saw some camp-fires gleaming just ahead, and finally yielded again to curiosity. I moved toward them cautiously, and succeeded in concealing myself behind a pile of brush, whence I could observe the camp at leisure. The men swarming about the fires were busy preparing their morning meal, but from what I could see of it, it was anything but tempting, nor were the men themselves attractive in appearance. I caught them, of course, at their worst moment — the moment of awakening — with eyes sleep-heavy and faces swollen and uniforms bedraggled, still chilled with the night cold and sodden with its frost. I did not know that on parade with colors flying and bugles blowing, or in line of battle with a stern conflict impending, these very men would hold the eye and make the pulses leap; so I concluded then and there that when I came to be a

soldier, I would be an officer like Colonel Simcoe, and wear a gold and scarlet uniform, gleaming with buttons and lace, and have as little as possible to do with these sordid creatures. Greatly disenchanted by first sight of an army, I made my way back to the house without seeking to view it further.

The horses were being led around to the door as I reached it, and I lingered about to catch a last glimpse of our distinguished guests. They clattered down the steps presently, and swung to saddle with much creaking of harness. Below in the camp I could hear the drums beating, and knew that the advance for Richmond had begun. Colonel Simcoe spied me in the shadow of a tree, and came striding toward me.

"Shake hands, young man," he said, bending down to me, "and in our name thank your mother for her entertainment, which, if not the most hospitable in the world, was of the best," and giving my hand a grip that left it aching, he mounted and rode away after the others. So that was the last I ever saw of this gallant gentleman who was destined in after years to reap so many honors. It was my last glimpse, too, of that other, whose name is still held in an execration perhaps not wholly merited.

He was cursed right heartily in that first week of January, for he left such a wound in Virginia's heart as she had not suffered since Dunmore had burned Norfolk, but at last he took ship and sailed away for England, already, perhaps, foreseeing the bitter end that awaited him.

Let us hasten with the rest of the story. Spring and summer sped by quietly enough, with much visiting back and forth ; but one crisp morning in early October our neighbor of Berkeley rode up to our door and plunged at once into the heart of the business which had brought him.

"You know, I suppose, Mrs. Randolph," he began, "that that old fox, Cornwallis, is caught at last at Yorktown, and must soon surrender?"

"Yes, thank God," said my mother.

"'T will be such a sight as may never again be witnessed in America. I am going to take my boy to see it, and I should be glad to have yours, too, if you will let him go."

"Oh, mother!" I cried.

She looked at us a moment with frightened eyes.

"Take my boy into the middle of the fighting!" she protested.

"Oh, not so bad as that, madam," laughed Mr. Harrison. "We will view it all from a perfectly safe distance—I will answer for that. May he go?"

I think his good humor and courtesy, as much as the passionate pleading in my eyes, won her over.

"Would you like to go, Stewart?" she asked, and I knew from her look that she consented.

"Right, madam!" cried our visitor heartily, as I threw my arms about her. "You are right not to deny the boy."

"But you have not thanked Mr. Harrison,

Stewart," reproved my mother. "How kind it was of him to think of you!"

"Thank Harry, rather," laughed that gentleman, as I turned to him. "'T was he protested he would not go without you — though I myself shall be very glad to have you, my boy."

"If you please, sir," I said hesitatingly, "I should like one thing."

"Stewart!" cried my mother, aghast at my boldness.

"Let him ask, madam," and he took both my hands in his. "What is it, sir?"

"If Harry could take along his Robinson Crusoe," I began, but he stopped me with a burst of laughter.

"'Tis packed already in the seat-flap," he said; "right on top, where it may be most easily come at."

So my cup of happiness was full to overflowing, and as we rolled away that afternoon in the great Harrison coach, I fear it was only my mother who wept at parting. That was an enchanted journey down the peninsula, with Crusoe for company and Harry's father to help us over the hard places and comment delightfully upon the story, and I was almost sorry that it had come to an end when, toward evening of the second day, we rumbled up to Oldham, Mr. Samuel Harrison's place, some few miles above Yorktown on the river.

Such a sight as awaited us the next morning when we were led forth to view the contending armies! From the top of a little hill near the bank

of the York, which the French had evacuated the day before in their advance, we could see a great part of their position quite clearly. On the right were our troops, with the artillery in the centre, near the commander's quarters. There the French lines began, artillery first, and then the infantry, stretching to the very bank of the river below us. Away in the distance we could dimly see the British works closely girdling the little town, and still beyond this a half dozen British men-of-war lay anchored in the stream. Far out on the bay we could just discern the white sails of the blockading squadron of French ships.

Mr. Harrison pointed out to us how our troops were ever creeping nearer and nearer to the British works; but he had more important things to do, so he left us presently, confiding us to the care of old Shad, and warning us not to leave the hillock where we were stationed. We had small wish to do so, and we sat for hours looking at the scene, until suddenly, away on the right, the artillery began to thunder. The fire ran along the line until every battery, American and French alike, was pouring shot and shell into the British works, as fast as the sweating men could serve the guns. The enemy replied but feebly, and after a time fell silent altogether. A dense cloud of smoke settled over the ramparts, and was carried slowly out to sea, where it lay banked against the horizon like a great thundercloud.

We ate the lunch that Shad had brought for us, and spent the afternoon watching the cannonading.

Mr. Harrison came back to us as evening fell, but we tarried where we were with no thought of dinner, for the French battery near the river had opened upon the British ships with red-hot ball, and presently we saw one of them wrapped in a torrent of flame. The fire spread with amazing speed, running along the rigging and to the very tops of the masts, while all around was thunder and lightning from the cannon. Even as we gazed there came a blinding flash of flame that rent the ship asunder, and ten seconds later a mighty roar, which told us the fire had reached her magazine. The blazing fragments fell back one by one into the river and disappeared.

“Come, boys, we must be going,” said Mr. Harrison at last, and we followed him, awed and silent.

Another British ship was set in flames next day, and in the three days that followed we could see our soldiers working like beavers in the trenches, which advanced every hour nearer the enemy. Meanwhile, all Virginia had come to see the spectacle, and on the morning of the seventeenth was gathered in a great throng exultantly watching the work of our batteries, when of a sudden the firing ceased.

A murmur of anxiety ran through the crowd.

“What is it? What has happened?” asked every one, looking fearfully into his neighbor’s face. Could it be that, after all, the prize was to escape? Some thought that the munitions had run out; some that the French ships had been

driven away and a great force under Clinton landed ; but presently came word that Lord Cornwallis had had enough, and asked a parley. What joy there was that night at every board within reach of the good news, and in what mighty bumpers did loyal Virginia drink the health of the First of Virginians and his men !

How shall I describe the stirring spectacle which took place next afternoon ? To the right of the Hampton road the Patriot army was drawn up, veterans of six years' service, with torn and faded regimentals ; while to the left, facing them, were the French, brilliant as toy soldiers. Down the road for more than a mile stretched this living avenue. Presently there broke forth a great storm of cheering, and I saw the tears rolling unchecked down Mr. Harrison's face as he gazed at a man sitting a white charger, riding slowly along the line.

" 'Tis the general," he whispered. " This is his hour of triumph and reward — God knows how he has earned it ! "

Near him, on a great bay horse, rode General Rochambeau, gorgeous in white and gold. He was no doubt a gallant soldier and great general, but there was something in the quiet dignity of the other which caught and held the eye, which fired the imagination, which needed no ornament to set it forth. Men and women sobbed aloud as they saw him there that day, and cheered between their sobs like mad things, and thanked the God that had given him to America.

Then a great silence fell upon the crowd, there came the beat of a drum from the British line, and the conquered troops marched slowly out of their intrenchments, — seven thousand of them and more, — their colors cased, their arms reversed. Colors and arms alike were surrendered to the victors, while the regimental bands played a quaint old air, forgot these many years, “The World Turned Upside Down.”

CHAPTER V

IN WHICH A SOLDIER COMES HOME AGAIN

WE were rolling homeward through the wood below Williamsburg, talking over the sight we had seen the day before, when there came the canter of horse's hoofs behind us, and a moment later I saw a man in faded uniform peering in at the window.

"I knew I could not mistake this coach!" he cried. "My dear sir, how are you?"

Mr. Harrison looked up with a start.

"Why, 't is Chris! Shad, stop the coach!" he roared, and as it came creaking to rest, he sprang into the road and had the horseman by both hands. "Dear boy, I asked for you among the officers at Yorktown, but was told you had been sent some days ago to Philadelphia with dispatches to the Congress."

"So I was, getting back but this morning, too late to witness yesterday's glorious spectacle. Now I'm homeward bound, thank God, to stay till there is further need of me — which I hope may be never. I see you took your boys with you to see the end."

Mr. Harrison gave him a queer glance.

"My boy, yes," said he, "and one who is not mine. Come hither, Stewart."

But my father had me in his arms before I had taken a second step.

"My dear boy," he murmured, over and over again. "My dear boy," and he pushed back my hair and held my face toward him. "I should have known him, sir. He has his mother's look — her eyes and mouth."

"And his father's spirit, I trust," added the other gently.

"To think, when I left home, he was but a baby, sir, and now look at him! Five years I've been away, Mr. Harrison. But so were many others — our general for a year more than that, and leaves his army now to go to his son's death-bed. Poor, gallant Custis! He made them carry him out, sir, that he might see the surrender."

"Yes, so I heard. You will ride with us in the coach, of course, Chris. Shad, take Major Randolph's horse."

"I am not alone," said my father, looking about him. "I have another son, Mr. Harrison. Come hither, sir!"

"Another son!" repeated our neighbor, in astonishment. "What do you mean by that, sir? Don't tell me — h'm!" he concluded abruptly, for there came riding toward us at my father's call a boy some three or four years older than myself. He had halted at a little distance, and approached us now slowly and with evident shyness.

"Nonsense!" laughed my father. "Frederic is twelve years old, as you see. Dismount, sir, and salute this gentleman."

The boy swung himself from the saddle and gave his hand to our neighbor.

“And this is Stewart, your brother,” continued my father.

He gave me his hand in turn, and I took it timidly, noting as I did so the deep and cruel scar that marred it. The impression that he made upon me in that moment has lasted me through life as a just and true one. He was tall and blade-straight; his hair, a dark chestnut, curled thickly over the erect head and low upon forehead, neck, and temples; and this, combined with the straight nose and arched lips, reminded me often in later years of an old Greek portrait. His eyes were a deep hazel, and as they looked at me now I fancied I saw dwelling in their depths, behind the shyness, a great kindness and sincerity. Then Harry was brought forward to clasp hands with him, and I saw the look, as of kindredship, that passed between them.

“Frederic will lead my horse, sir,” said my father, and climbed with us into the coach.

“Now out with the story, Chris,” said Mr. Harrison, when we were settled, I upon my father’s knee with his arm about me, and very thankful and happy that I had found such a one to be my father.

Of the story, as he told it then, I did not understand quite all the details, but I shall tell it in its entirety as I know it now — as I have, indeed, told many things already.

“Well, then,” he began, “when the Virginia troops were ordered south to defend the Carolinas,

I went with my regiment, of course, and was, with seven thousand others, straightway gathered by General Lincoln into the trap at Charleston. There I was stricken with swamp fever, and was taken into the house of a man who had never before seen me, but who cared for me tenderly as a brother. More than that, when the British marched into the town in May, without having to fire a shot, he concealed me and lied for me, and when I came again to my senses, I was lying in a very comfortable corner of his attic. He nursed me back to health, sir, and I am quite certain that I owe my life to Gerhart Rohlman and his son Frederic."

"Go on, Chris," said his listener, "though I think I can guess what is coming, my boy."

"When I had got my strength back, he smuggled me one night out of Charleston, where the guard was but loosely kept, since there was no longer an American army in the south, and I made my way to Sumter's rangers. He is a Virginian, sir, and got his first lesson in fighting under Braddock. We harried Cornwallis, I promise you. And then, one night, there came sad news from Charleston. Near a hundred of her leading men had been taken from their beds by the British, and hurried aboard the prison ship in the harbor. Here some half dozen of them were tried by court-martial; the others were sent to prison at St. Augustine. Among the former was my friend Rohlman. He got leave to write me a message at the end. There was no one else to whom he could appeal, and he

asked me to find his boy and care for him. The first I have done, and the second, God willing, I intend to do."

"But what of the father?" queried Mr. Harrison. "Surely, when he is freed, he will wish to have his son."

"The father was hung by that brute, Prevost, the morning following the court-martial. All his property was confiscated."

"He was found guilty of treason, then?"

"He was found guilty of harboring a rebel and concealing him from the British troops, afterwards aiding him to escape from the British lines. The rebel was myself, sir."

"My dear Chris," spoke up the other quickly, "forgive the way I spoke to you at first. I might have known that in this, as in all things, you had played the gentleman and man of honor."

He did not answer, and for a long time they sat silent, gazing from the window at the trees and meadows.

"There were many such cases," my father said at last, "and not all were on the British side, I fear. The Carolinas were so torn with faction that I think they suffered most of all the colonies. It was partly to get the boy I went to Philadelphia. Cornwallis had exiled there the wives and children of all those he hung or sent to Florida. There were dispatches to be carried to the Congress and replies to be brought. While waiting for them I made search for the boy, and found him at last working in a chandler's shop, very faithfully, his

master said ; but I think that he was glad to come away."

We stopped that night at Tazewell Hall, and though its master, our cousin Edmund, was away at Philadelphia, we were made none the less welcome. Early next morning we continued our journey up the peninsula, and by noon had reached Berkeley, where we stopped a few minutes that my father might greet the lovely mistress of the place and drink a glass of wine with its master. Then he lifted me to the saddle before him, and with Frederic following, set off on the five short miles that divided us from home. As we turned into the road that led to the house, I could feel his arm about me trembling, and at last he pulled his horse to a stop.

"Run on ahead, Stewart," he said chokingly, "and tell your mother I am coming. I had best not burst in upon her unannounced."

So I ran on obediently and up the steps to the door.

"Where is mother, Pomp?" I asked, as he opened to me.

"In d' lib'ry, I 'specks, honey," he answered, and I was off along the hall and in a moment was in her arms.

"Did Mr. Harrison bring you over?" she asked, as she kissed me. "You invited him in, I hope?"

"No, mother. He left us at Berkeley."

"Us? Whom do you mean, Stewart?"

Her face went suddenly white as she looked at me, and she clasped her hands against her heart.

“He has come!” she whispered, and in the instant was on her feet and speeding along the hall. “Chris! Oh, Chris!” she cried from the door, and I caught a glimpse of a tall man throwing himself from the saddle, as she ran down to him and straight into his arms, to be clasped against his heart.

CHAPTER VI

I DINE IN DISTINGUISHED COMPANY

FREDERIC fell so naturally into his place in our home that it seemed to have been awaiting him. It was not until he came that I understood how empty my life had been of comradeship. And now I had two comrades, for Mr. Harrison insisted that we both be sent to Berkeley to study, in company with his son Henry, under the direction of Mr. Ogilvie, who was glad enough to eke out his somewhat scanty income in this way. And I soon grew to love the pale, delicate, wide-eyed boy second only to Frederic himself. He was often ill, and then I would sit and read to him hours together. Many a time, too, we were guests at his father's table.

Then, if the day were fair, Frederic and I would start back afoot to Wyndham, taking our time upon the way, loitering along the river to watch its broad and placid surface, and seldom reaching home until darkness was at hand. Often, too, Frederic would bring with him a pistol father had given him, and spend half an hour, with curious pertinacity, in practicing at a target. He would sometimes offer me the pistol, but I tried to use it only once or twice, with such poor result that I

was afterwards content to lie under a near-by tree and watch him, and wonder at this strange development of his character, which seemed so at variance with the rest. He soon grew quite skillful, but never appeared satisfied with his marksmanship, and kept doggedly at it so long as he had ball and powder left.

Sometimes, on our homeward way, we would meet father in the fields, overlooking our people, and then we would stay with him until the day's work was done. Those were busy days with him and anxious ones, as with many another planter. Six years of neglect had to be made good; a fortune, never great, now almost vanished, to be regained. There were fields to prepare and plant, cabins to rebuild, stock to buy, and what not. He went about the task cheerfully and hopefully, never doubting his ability to set things right again in time, but as the years passed, there came certain wrinkles about his mouth and on his brow that war had never planted there.

We, too, were not without our occasional feasts and merry-makings, and one in especial do I remember. It was nearly the last of May, and rain, long delayed and anxiously awaited, had set in heavily toward evening and continued all the night. The house was astir long ere daybreak, and we were called with the others.

"No lessons to-day, boys," said father, as we appeared at table. "I'll need your hands, as well as those of every other creature on the place, to get the plants out. Come, sit down."

Down we sat and bolted our breakfasts, happy enough at the prospect of sharing in the day's business, and presently we journeyed forth together to the broad field where overseer and laborers — men, women, and children — awaited the master's coming. The sun, just peeping over the eastern trees, revealed how carefully the field had been prepared with its long rows of mounds, each ready to receive its plant.

"Are you ready, Bush?" asked father of the overseer, an old negro grown gray in the service of mother's family.

"All ready, suh."

"All right, then ; go ahead," and at the word, two hundred hands began the work of planting. The young plants were lifted carefully from the seed-beds, where they had been growing for nearly five months past, protected from the cold, and carried by the children to the field. There they were placed one in each hillock, by the men, while others came after to shape up the mounds carefully.

"You boys keep these children straight," said father, and keep them straight we did, as well as we were able, seeing that the planters were always supplied and that the plants reached them in good condition, with roots intact and plenty of moist earth about them.

What a busy time it was and what a happy one ! How light-heartedly they went about the work, with what jibes and jests and shouts of raucous laughter. One of them burst into a song, and in a moment the field was ringing with the refrain.

Dinner was to be served to them on the spot, so that few of the precious moments might be lost, and presently two great caldrons were simmering over a fire and sending forth an odor that made even my mouth water. But we went back to the house for lunch, leaving affairs in the hands of Bush, — who, I think, was a sterner taskmaster than my father, — and when we reached the field again, their meal was over and work had been resumed. Nor did it slacken until every hill was crowned with a tip of green.

“A good day’s work, boys,” said the master, looking over the field with great satisfaction, when the last plant was placed. “Now go back to your quarters and I’ll see that every one of you has a good swig of rum to wash his supper down.”

They went streaming from the field in groups, laughing, talking, singing; still fresh enough, after the toil of the day, to spend long hours in merry-making before their cabins. I know that there are few forms of labor more wearing than that in the tobacco fields, yet our people were happy and contented and loved their masters.

Frederic and I had held an earnest consultation during the afternoon, and as we turned homeward, I broached its subject.

“This is what we should like to do every day, sir,” I began, “Frederic and I.”

“What would you like to do?” asked father, somewhat sharply.

“To help you, sir. We both think we have had

enough of schooling, and we should like to work, sir, — to be of some account.”

Father turned from one to the other of us with a queer light in his eyes.

“What has set this bee buzzing?” he asked at last.

“Only our desire to help you, sir,” answered Frederic stoutly. “Speaking for myself, I think I am quite old enough to be of use to you.”

“And Stewart?”

“He is four years younger. He should have the best you can give him, sir. He is your son.”

“And are not you also my son?” demanded father, throwing his arm about him. “I thank God I have two such sons,” and he stopped and drew me also within his embrace. “Now, listen to me, boys,” he continued very gravely. “I wish you to continue at your books and gain the learning that befits a gentleman. Some time, perhaps, I may have need of you, and when that time comes, I pledge you to call you to me. Until that time, you must make the most of Mr. Ogilvie’s teaching. Do you agree?”

Of course we promised him, very proud of his confidence, and we went on together, each holding a hand and loving him utterly. Night had come in earnest, and as we neared the house, the broad rays of light streaming from its windows looked most cheerful.

“Margaret seems to be having some special illumination,” remarked father. “Perhaps we have guests,” and he quickened his pace.

"Chris!" cried a voice from the door, as we set foot upon the lowest step, and looking up, I saw a tall form silhouetted against the light.

Father gave my hand a quick, convulsive clasp, then dropped it and sprang up the steps.

"You here, sir!" he cried. "You here and I not know it!"

"We came but a moment ago, Chris, and I commanded Margaret not to send for you. I know what planting day is, sir, and we have all the evening."

"Still," protested father, "with you here — why, it shames me! Margaret should have known."

"I did know, dear," said mother, coming forward into the light, "and I made bold to disobey Colonel Stewart. I sent a boy secretly by the back way after you, but he must have missed you."

"Hah!" cried the colonel. "So this is the way that you obey me, madam! We of the army are accustomed to punish such disobedience. I must punish you, madam!"

"As you please, sir," answered mother very demurely.

The other held her face up to his and kissed her.

"There," he said, "that were penalty enough for any insurrection. But are n't those the boys, Chris?"

"Ay. Come hither, Stewart, and meet your godfather."

Colonel Stewart stooped and put his arm about me as I came up the steps, and drew me into the light.

“So this is my godson!” he said. “I have not seen you, sir, since the day of your christening, and a very red and vociferous fellow you were then, let me tell you. The boy favors you, Chris, — nose, forehead, chin, — but he has Margaret’s eyes and mouth, which are much prettier ones than yours.”

“There is another,” began father.

“Ay, I know,” interrupted Colonel Stewart quickly. “I met Mr. Harrison on the road hither and he told me the story. It was like you, sir. Let me see the boy.”

So Frederic was called up, too, and given a clasp of that kind hand and a greeting from that generous heart.

“Now come and meet your other guest, Chris,” continued Colonel Stewart.

“My other guest!” cried father, aghast at the thought that he had loitered at the door.

“Yes; a far more distinguished guest than I. But he is the soul of courtesy, and I am sure will pardon us our lack of it.”

As we entered the hall together, a tall figure rose to meet us. What a courtly one it was, and how winning the face that smiled down at us!

“General St. Clair,” said Colonel Stewart, “permit me to present to you Christopher Randolph, my dear nephew, and his two sons, Stewart and Frederic.”

He came forward to greet us, and I found myself for a moment looking into the sweetest blue-gray eyes I have ever seen in a man’s face — the

sincerest and most truthful. As he turned to the others I could look my fill at him — the chestnut hair, just tinged with gray and worn without powder, the broad brow, the winning mouth — it has never been my fortune to see a handsomer man, nor, with one exception, a more graceful or distinguished.

It was he who took mother in to dinner, as he might have taken the greatest lady in the land; who led the talk because he saw the others wished him to; who proved himself then as always the thoughtful and accomplished gentleman.

“We have been in the south, Colonel Stewart and I, you know, Mrs. Randolph,” he said. “General Washington sent us there with six regiments to the aid of General Greene. In faith, he needed none,” he added. “The British in the Carolinas have quite lost the wish to fight, and are thinking only how they can withdraw.”

“Yes, there will be no more battles,” said Colonel Stewart quietly. “Even Lord North has got enough, I think.”

“Pray God it be so!” cried my mother; and “Amen,” said all the others with one voice.

“Do you know, Chris, we came very near not getting here at all,” said the colonel. “Mr. Harrison was almost angry with us for not stopping at Berkeley. But I wanted to see you all, and I felt sure you could find a place to put us.”

“A place to put you! Don’t insult us, sir! General St. Clair,” he went on, turning to him with bright eyes, “may I tell you a story about him?”

"Indeed you may!" cried that gentleman.

"I am but a younger son, you know," said father, "with the portion that usually falls to younger sons. But, like many another, I lost my heart to a girl who had the right to look a deal higher if she chose" —

"Nonsense, sir!" cried mother, very red.

"But she did n't choose, though her father did for her. And what did this dear man do when he got wind of the affair — he had already been a second father to me, sir — but post off to Margaret's parents. He said he knew what it was to eat one's heart out, as I was eating mine."

"And so I do, sir," said the colonel.

"And he put the case before them so convincingly that he quite won them over. Indeed, who could resist him? God bless him!" cried father.

The general looked from one to the other and back again, smiling.

"Indeed I know how irresistible he is, Major Randolph," he said. "I know how his men loved him. I have seen his staff crowding about him, each one longing to cut his meat for him — just as you did to-night, my dear madam — to black his boots, if need be; to kiss the ground he walked on. Why, he refused promotion a dozen times, saying that he had gone high enough — that there were better men!"

"Oh, come, sir!" growled the colonel, very crimson. "I might tell some tales of you if I liked. Who was it saved our army at Trenton; who was it gave his fortune and every drop of his

heart's devotion to our cause, though he was worse used than Arnold, and had a dozen times his temptation to become a traitor; who" —

"Enough, enough!" cried the other, throwing up his hands. "I beg a truce! You overwhelm me! I propose a toast, gentlemen, which I think should be ever first with all loyal Americans — General Washington. He needs no poor praise of mine."

We drank it standing — even we boys were given a glass for that — and as I looked up into the tender and reverent faces of the men I caught some glimpse of how our great captain's soldiers worshiped him.

"And I have a toast," said Colonel Stewart, after a moment's silence. "I drink to the man who stood true to him in his hours of bitter trial; who has thought ever of his country first, of his friends second, and of himself last of all; a man whom I am honored to call my dear friend — Arthur St. Clair."

And we drank that also.

"After two such toasts," added the colonel, seeing, perhaps, the purpose in father's face, "I am sure 't would be folly to propose any other."

Forgive me if I linger on the scene, but its memory is very dear to me. And I am quite sure that I shall never sit at table in better company than I did that night with those three loving, simple, Christian gentlemen.

The damp in the air had turned it somewhat chill, and we found a fire crackling on the hearth

when we returned to the hall. My godfather appropriated Frederic and me at once, and with an arm around each of us asked us many questions about our work and play. Then the talk turned to siege and battle, to war — not only to the one just closing, but to another that had gone before, when bluecoat and redcoat fought side by side against a common foe. For General St. Clair had been with Wolfe that glorious day upon the Plains of Abraham, where he had seized the colors of his regiment from the hand of a dying soldier, and bore them till the victory was won. And Colonel Stewart had been one of those who carried the dying Braddock from that fatal field by the Monongahela — small need to tell it here, since he has told the story himself in his memoirs. How the evening flew — until, of a sudden, mother looked up at the clock, which had just started chiming.

“Midnight!” she cried. “Is it possible! Come, children, you must get to bed.”

“And we also, madam,” said Colonel Stewart. “We must start betimes to-morrow.”

“To-morrow!” echoed father. “Nonsense, sir! To-morrow and for the next week at least both of you must be my guests!”

But Colonel Stewart shook his head.

“I am sorry, Chris, but it cannot be. I have been away from Riverview so long that I fear affairs there are in a bad way. I must make all haste home.”

“But you at least, sir, will remain,” protested

father, turning to the other. "I assure you we shall count ourselves most fortunate and honored to have you."

"Thank you, sir," returned St. Clair, "but I have cause for haste even greater than my friend. I must first to Philadelphia to report, then out to my estate at Ligonier, of which I yet hope to save some fragments."

Dear gentleman! He found himself quite ruined, not master of one shilling, as he himself wrote to his commander, and with small prospect of ever regaining the fortune he had given freely to his country. Well, there were many such, as I was soon to learn.

We bade them all good-night, lighted our candle, and mounted to our room. But despite short hours of rest we were up at dawn, fearful that we might lose the chance of eating another meal with our new friends. Their horses were brought out ready for the journey as soon as the meal was ended.

"God bless you, boys," said Colonel Stewart, bending over us. "You must come to me some time at Riverview and meet my daughter. She must be near as tall as you are, Stewart; though, bless me, I have n't seen her these five years! You must let them come, Chris, and come with them yourself, sir, — you and Margaret."

"And to Ligonier," added his companion. "I will show you, madam, that we of Pennsylvania know how to match even a Virginia welcome."

He bent over mother's hand and kissed it; but

Colonel Stewart took toll from her lips, with a whispered compliment that left her blushing like a rose as they cantered away down the road. They looked back as they came to the turn westward, and we waved to them and shouted a last good-by. They lifted their hats to us and passed from sight behind the trees.

CHAPTER VII

THE STORY OF A SCAR

ON Sundays and such holidays as Mr. Ogilvie's absence about his parish duties gave us, the library was a favorite resort with Frederic and me. It was he who drew me there, at first, and not the books, but as time went on, I caught from him something of his love for them. We had not many volumes, — there were other things far dearer to the hearts of our Virginia gentry, — but still enough, I think, for a man to round himself upon. Shakespeare there was, and Don Quixote and Gil Blas, and Gulliver and Plutarch and the Thousand and One Nights; yes, and Tom Jones and Roderick Random and Moll Flanders — a strange enough assortment, to be sure, and one which most parents would frown on nowadays. Yet let me say that the essential purity of the old régime has made me to distrust somewhat these new manners which would deny to men and women alike the right to the warm, red blood that God has given them.

But let that pass. Whatever present-day teaching, certainly Frederic nor I got anything but good from our reading, and followed with equal delight the adventures of that poor, gallant gentleman of La Mancha and of Squire Allworthy's

scapegrace nephew. Perhaps our very youth helped carry us safely through, or perhaps it was that atmosphere of instinctive reverence for women in which we lived, in common with the families of all Virginia gentlemen. I smile to think how often already in this tale I have used that phrase, — Virginia gentleman, — but there is no other which quite expresses what the men of old Virginia were. The day was close at hand when the type was to grow slowly obsolete, and, I fear, with our changed ideals, beyond hope of resurrection.

Of all the volumes in our little library, the one in which we found most delight and which we opened oftenest was the *Thousand and One Nights*. Its store of wonders seemed quite inexhaustible, and we went from the Fisherman to the Royal Mendicants, from Nouredin to the Barber's Brothers, dazzled and amazed. We were seated one morning at the window, deep in the story of Aziz and Azizah, when chance willed it that I should see a corner of Frederic's heart which he had never shown me.

“‘By Allah,’” he read, “‘I must cause thee to bear a mark of my resentment. So saying, she inflicted upon me a cruel wound’” —

He stopped suddenly, his eyes upon his own right hand and the cruel wound it bore. My eyes were there, too, and the impulse of the moment forced me to a question which I had always wished to ask, and yet had somehow shrunk from.

“How came it there, Frederic?” I asked, and touched the scar gently with my finger.

His nostrils grew suddenly tense and quite white and his eyes seemed almost black as he looked at me.

"I got it at Charleston," he said slowly, "the morning my father was — murdered. His murderer gave it me."

He sat for a moment quite motionless, and then his self-control dropped from him and he flung himself forward sobbing on the window-seat, his face buried in his hands.

"Oh, Frederic," I cried, aghast at the havoc I had wrought, "forgive me! I was thoughtless!"

He put out a hand to me silently, and after a few moments the sobbing died away. At last he lifted his face and looked at me.

"Dear Stewart," he said quite steadily, "there is nothing to forgive — nothing in which you have offended. I have always wanted you to know, but was never brave enough to tell you. I am going to tell you now."

He turned half from me, as though fearing to let me look into his eyes, and sat gazing out along the road.

"From the very first," he began, "my father was a friend of the patriot cause, — God knows he had suffered enough from the English over-sea, — but Charleston was so torn with faction that he saw no good could come of adding his voice to the uproar and so stayed silent. You of Virginia can have little notion of how we of the Carolinas were divided — brother against brother, father against son."

Could we not? — and I remembered our cousin, John Randolph, king's attorney, and his son.

“But when General Lincoln's army came to Charleston,” Frederic said, “he saw at last where he could be of service, and he did a hundred things to aid it. Perhaps he had been wiser to leave the place before the British investment was complete, but none of us thought General Lincoln would so soon surrender. Besides, had he left, there was one whom he must have abandoned, whom he had grown to love dearly, and who was very ill. So he remained.”

I pressed his hand to tell him that I understood.

“The British marched in, but we were not molested. One night a man came to our door and asked for aid. He had been set upon by thieves, he said, and injured. He had some cuts about his head and his nose was bleeding. My father took him in, bound up his wounds, and gave him a bed for the night. In the morning, he begged that he might stay with us. His name, he said, was Jonas Morgan; he had been a sailor; his ship was in the harbor when the British entered the town; they had confiscated it and thrown him upon shore to starve; he had no home, no friends, no money; he was willing to do anything. It chanced that we needed a man, for our other one had run away at the first smell of fighting, so my father kept him. He worked willingly enough and seemed very grateful, so that at last my father came to trust him wholly, talked freely when he was by, and sent him with messages hither and thither.

Finally one morning he left the house and did not return. That day we got your father out of Charleston, and that night our house was broken into by an armed patrol, my father taken from his bed and haled away, without being permitted even to say good-by to me. For two days I tried to get some news of him, but could not. I learned at last that he had been taken to the prison-ship in the harbor, in company with near a hundred others. All his friends were in that number, and I had none to ask for counsel; but I went down to the water every day to look out at the ship and wonder what he was doing.

“One morning, I saw a great crowd upon her deck. There was a roll of drums, and four dark figures were drawn quickly to the yard-arm. I watched them, not understanding in the least what had happened.”

His voice had grown so hoarse and low I could scarce hear it. He stopped and pressed his head down on the sill, and I took one of his hands timidly in mine and held it close.

“So I stood looking at the ship,” he went on at last, “and at the four dangling black things.

“‘Well, you’re a dutiful son!’ said a voice behind me, and I turned quickly to find Jonas Morgan standing there.

“‘Oh, Jonas!’ I cried, and stopped, for I saw that he wore a British uniform and had a sword at his side.

“‘Well?’ he asked, and looked at me from beneath his eyelids in a way I never liked.

“ ‘I did n’t know you had joined the British,’ I said after a moment.

“ ‘Did n’t you?’ and he still stood looking at me, with his eyes half shut.

“ ‘But, oh, Jonas,’ I cried, the thought coming to me quite suddenly, ‘perhaps you can help me even more! Do you know where my father is? He was taken away the night after you left us, and they tell me he is on the ship yonder.’

“ He licked his lips for a moment and looked at me still more queerly.

“ ‘Yes, I know where he is,’ he said. ‘You’re right about his being on the ship. If you look sharp, you’ll see him.’

“ ‘See him!’ I echoed.

“ He nodded, and I strained my eyes out toward the ship.

“ ‘He was having a gay time out there a moment ago — dancing,’ he said, and leered at me most horribly.

“ ‘Dancing!’

“ ‘Yes — on air!’

“ Then I understood — I gazed at him — at the leer on his face — at the light in his eyes — and I understood more, perhaps, than he would have had me do — it was he who had betrayed my father, who had played the spy in our house! And my father had taken him in, had treated him with kindness, had never thought of doubting him! Oh, if I could have blasted him, could have torn him limb from limb, how I should have gloried in it! A sort of madness seized me as I looked at

him standing there, and I sprang at him like a wild thing and buried my teeth in his hand — ough!”

He stopped, with the taste of blood, doubtless, still on his lips. Then the mood passed, he sighed and went on more calmly.

“He shook me off and cut at my head with his sword, but I threw up my hand and caught the blow there — as you see. He would have killed me, I think, but that some one pulled him away from me, and they carried me off to prison. They decided I was too young to hang, and so sent me to Philadelphia with the others. That is all.”

I had both his hands in mine now, and I stooped and kissed the dear one with the scar.

“All but one thing, Stewart,” he added; “there is one thing more. I am quite sure that one day fate will give that devil into my hands. His face is graved so deep upon my heart that I should know him anywhere; besides, he will carry to his grave the mark I left upon him.”

The words were spoken quietly enough, but there came a look in his eyes as he turned to me that I never forgot, and that I was destined to see there once again.

“That is with me always,” he added slowly, and turned back to the window, while I sat thinking over the story. Suddenly a flash of light broke in upon me.

“So that is why you practice with the pistol every day down by the river!” I cried.

He nodded.

“And why you asked father to give you lessons in fence!”

Again he nodded.

I could find nothing more to say — I could only sit and look at him. Only I resolved that I, too, would strive to grow proficient with sword and pistol, that I might not fail him should he have need of me in that supreme moment which he awaited with such confidence. He spoke never again of the past, but I felt that there was a new bond between us.

Those were happy days. I love to look back upon them, to recall them one by one, to picture to myself their scenes — our family grouped before the fire or on the wide veranda, the occasional trip to the capital, the hours of study at Berkeley, the round of daily duties — I have only to close my eyes to see these and a thousand more, and I thank God that at least the memory of them is left me.

CHAPTER VIII

ENTER SIMON P. ALLEN

"So ends the lesson," said Mr. Ogilvie, one morning, closing the book with more than usual emphasis. "You have come to the end of my teaching, boys, — I have given you all I can. And even were this not so, I must still say good-by, for I am going back to England, please God, and away from this distracted country."

Distracted he might well call it, rent as it was with controversy, yet we had moved on quietly enough, and it was only this announcement of his that brought chaos into our little world.

"I hope you will go farther with your studies," he went on, "but even if you do not, you are all well grounded in mathematics and the humanities. Now I must say good-by," and so, with a warm hand-clasp, he passed out of our lives.

Harry, we soon found, was indeed to go farther, and arrangements were already toward for sending him away to Hampden-Sidney college, which fact we duly announced to father that night. He doubtless saw the question in our eyes, for he sat silent for some moments looking at the fire, with no sound save the click-click of mother's needles opposite to break the stillness.

"I should like to send you with him, boys," he said at last, "but I fear I cannot."

"Nor do we wish to go, sir," said Frederic, quickly. "I, at least, am too old for further schooling; besides, there is something else I would much rather do."

"I know — I know," and he smiled at both our faces. "Well, I fear you are going to have your wish. You see, I have not forgot my promise."

There was a tone in his voice that brought us both to his side.

"With two such sons," he said, looking up at first one and then the other, "I think we need not fear to meet the world, dear Margaret."

"Fear, indeed!" cried she, and flung down her knitting and came to nestle to him.

"So I think we would best tell them all, dear," he added. "They have the right to know."

She nodded silently, and so he told us very simply, and with no complaining, of the ruin which overshadowed us. It was a common tale enough, just then, and was met in scores of other Virginia homes as bravely as in ours. We were free, indeed, but our freedom had been bought at a fearful price of blood and treasure. The one had been already paid, drop for drop; the day of reckoning for the other was at hand.

Let it be admitted, frankly, that the colony had been living carelessly over a volcano. I am sure that no Virginia gentleman had deliberately thought of wronging any man of his money, yet it had become the fashion with nearly all of them to

live far beyond their means. Under the old law their land was inviolate, and must go down to their children in any case — too frequently, a great burden of debt was a portion of the heritage. They became accustomed to a style of living almost princely; lavish hospitality was a tradition and point of honor; the latest decrees of fashion were followed as slavishly along the James as in Pall Mall. Whether the crop be good or bad, the price high or low, there were certain things to be got each year from London — laces, silks, brocades, and a thousand trinkets for my lady's toilet; wines for my lord, yes, and finery, too; a new coach, perhaps, since the gilding on the old one had grown dingy; any folly that for the moment caught the London vogue. So, in the end, a great debt piled up against them, which they trusted chance to settle. Then came the war, and all who had money or credit left gave freely to the public cause. These the Congress showed little disposition to repay, — indeed, it had not yet the power, — so they were left quite bankrupt.

Then came their death-blow — the death-blow, too, of the old life — for the law of entail was abolished. It was argued that no such law could exist in a republic, since it tended to foster a landed aristocracy and to prevent the collection of just debts; yet its repeal at this moment meant ruin for hundreds of Virginia families, their lands were thrown open to the despoiler, and dark days were at hand.

“I had hoped to keep afloat by close economy,”

said father sadly, after he had told us all this, "and in time clear off the debts ; but I fear it cannot be done, even if the time were given me. Our markets are shut off, and the crop is not what it was when the land was new. I have reason to think our creditors mean soon to move against us ; so I see no way out of the coil."

Mother was nestling close against him, and she reached up and pulled his face down to hers.

"We have still each other, dear Chris," she said. "Don't forget that."

"I am not like to," and he looked up at us smiling, with something of the old light in his face. "What is it, boy ?" he asked, as Frederic opened his lips and shut them again.

"Oh, if I could but make us a home in a new land, sir !" he cried, his face aglow. "I am big enough and strong enough, and here have I been dawdling over my books. How I should love to do it—to hew down trees, to till the land, to hunt, to fish—just as was done once, sir, along this very river !"

"Ay—a hundred and fifty years ago," and father smiled at his eagerness. "This home-building is a long and dreary business, my boy—not half so easy as home-breaking."

Mother silenced him with an imperative little gesture. She would permit no self-accusing.

But Frederic's words were ringing in my ears. A home in a new land !

"I have it !" I cried suddenly.

"Well, out with it, Stewart," and father smiled

again. "It seems we old heads may well take counsel of you young ones."

"Old heads — nonsense!" protested mother. "I am not ready yet to be called old, sir!"

"Nor are you," and he drew her more closely to him. "I protest you are still sweet-and-twenty, Margaret. But let us have Stewart's plan."

"Were you not saying the other day, sir," I asked, big with the importance of my idea, "that Virginia had set aside a great tract of land in the west for her soldiers?"

"Ay," he nodded, "all between the Scioto and Miami rivers."

"And you have a right to some of it?"

"To four thousand acres."

"Well, then," I cried, "why may not Frederic and I go out to this land, claim it, and get it ready for you? You would go, would n't you, Frederic?"

"I should love to," he answered simply.

But father shook his head.

"You cannot go, Stewart, because the Indians still occupy these lands and refuse to give them up. Some day, perhaps, they will be valuable, but now they are quite worthless."

My heart fell within me, and I turned a despairing glance upon Frederic.

"But a great many people have gone west to live, sir," he said.

"Yes, to Kentucky. That seems not to be the home of any Indian tribe. The Indians, apparently, do not care so much for that land."

“But why?” I asked.

“Because the land north of the Ohio is better — more fertile, nearer the settlements, preferable in every way. They say the valley of the Scioto is the richest in the whole west.”

“Besides,” cried mother, “do you think I would permit my boys to go out into that wilderness? Even if there were no Indians, think of the savage beasts that live there — lions and tigers, for all I know!”

“No, my dear, no lions nor tigers,” laughed father, “but dangers enough without them, and hardship such as we have no notion of. We will say no more about it, boys,” and so the subject was dismissed.

But not from our brains. Frederic and I discussed it eagerly that night. The thought of penetrating that wild and fertile valley with the soft Indian name quite fascinated us. What an adventure it would be to build a home in the wilderness, to hew out a great estate there — why might it not become a second Virginia? I demanded with enthusiasm.

“I doubt if we could raise tobacco there,” said Frederic. “Besides, there would be no way of getting it to market. No, we should have to be a little world to ourselves, Stewart — to provide for our own wants. But I am sure we could do it. We must do something — I, at least.”

Neither of us quite realized how insistent the need was that we “do something,” but we were soon to know. We rode over to Berkeley two

days later to say good-by to Harry, and very mournfully we watched him as he was driven away along the avenue. Mr. Harrison had us in, of course, for lunch, and soon after we started homeward.

We found a strange man sitting before the fireplace in the hall when we entered, with father and mother together opposite him. We stopped, thinking him some guest.

"Come hither, boys," said father. "You also have a right to hear what this gentleman has to say — Allen, I think you said?"

"Simon P. Allen — yes, sir," assented the other, hitching around in his chair.

"These are my sons, Frederic and Stewart," and we bowed to Mr. Allen — there was something in father's look that held us back from a more cordial greeting. "Now, Mr. Allen, if you will have the kindness to continue."

"Huh — well, really, sir, I'd about finished all I had t' say," and he glanced from one to the other and hitched about again. What struck me most in him at that moment was the ineffectiveness of his appearance, he seemed so washed out, so colorless, so undistinguished. Clothing, hair, eyes, countenance — all alike were faded and dull and hueless. Only his voice was memorable in any way, and it had a burr, an edge, that was not to be forgotten.

"Please begin at the beginning, then," said father, a little shortly. "I wish these boys to understand your mission."

"Huh — well," began the other, producing from his pocket an impressive document, "I've got a warrant of attorney here t' c'lect certain lawful debts, amountin' to" — and he looked at his paper to be sure of his figures — "let me see — to three thousand eight hundred and fifty-two pounds, three shillings, fourpence, costs included."

I can see them yet sitting there by the fire, clasping each other's hands, thinking, doubtless, with keen remorse, how great a portion of this debt had been needlessly contracted.

"I s'pose y' don't deny that y' owe th' money?" asked Allen.

"No, I don't deny it."

"So th' question I was goin' t' ask when them two young gentlemen come in," continued Allen, "was, kin y' pay it?"

"How soon must it be paid?"

"Huh — well," said Allen slowly, "it's been owin' a long time. I guess it 'd better be paid right away."

"You know perfectly well that is impossible," said father bitterly.

"We might borrow it, dear Chris," said mother, in a whisper. "Anything is better than to be put out homeless. Mr. Harrison" —

Allen, whose acute ears had caught the words, interrupted her with a laugh, that brought the blood to father's face.

"Harrison's worse off 'n you are," he said. "He owes somethin' like fifty thousand pound."

"We don't care to know what he owes, sir,"

began father angrily, but stopped when he felt the pressure of the dear hand upon his arm.

Again Allen laughed.

"P'raps not," he said, "only it's well t' know some things. All you Randolphs have been livin' purty high, an' I venture t' say th' Randolphs won't own an acre of land in Virginia before many years;" a prediction, indeed, which came all too sadly true.

"Please keep to the business in hand, sir," said father shortly. "I repeat it: I can't pay — not now. What then, sir?"

"Huh — well," responded Allen, "I'll go up t' Richmond and git an execution made out. Th' sheriff'll bring it down and sell off th' place."

"Sell it — but to whom?" demanded father. "The place, including the negroes, is worth three times the debt, but who can buy, if all alike are bankrupt?"

Allen hitched around in his chair for a moment without answering.

"Huh — well, th' fact is," he said at last, "if they ain't no other bidders, I'm empowered t' bid it in myself."

"Yourself?"

"Yes — for th' creditors, of course."

"And for what amount?"

"Why, fer th' amount of th' debt, t' be sure." His eyes were on the floor — he dared not raise them.

For a moment there was silence. For the first time we all of us understood just what this forced

sale meant. There was to be no surplus. We were to go forth naked into the world. It was incongruous, I know, but at the instant dear old Sancho Panza flashed into my head, and I smiled despite myself.

“That will do, sir,” said father quietly at last, rising and opening the door. “You may go. Proceed with whatever measures you think best. Good-day.”

And Simon P. Allen, like a bird of ill omen, went down the steps, mounted his horse, and clattered away toward Berkeley, on another errand of like nature. Its kind old master received the blow like a man, sorrowing only for his children's sake, and faithful to the last to his great canon of Virginia hospitality, compelled Allen to sit down and dine with him! Dear man, he did not long survive his misfortunes, for he was stricken with illness quite suddenly one evening after dinner, and died as he had lived, merry and undaunted, with a jest upon his lips. And Harry, instead of heir to a great estate, found himself, like many another gently reared, thrown for a living upon his own resources.

CHAPTER IX

WE ARE TAKEN CAPTIVE

WE had trouble enough of our own, Heaven knows, yet after the master of Berkeley had been laid to rest, mother spent a week with Mrs. Harrison, until she might rally somewhat from the shock of her great sorrow. Harry had been called home by his father's death, and flew to me so soon as he learned of our misfortunes, vowing that he would save us; but he found out soon enough that he himself was in dire need of help. How that knowledge chafed him! He felt his loss of fortune, just as his father would have done, not for the line it set about him personally, but because it made him powerless to serve his friends. He did not stay long at Berkeley, for he had been made ward to Mr. Robert Morris, and by his advice went on to Philadelphia to choose a profession by which he might earn a livelihood.

Meanwhile, the execution against us was made out in due form at the Richmond court, and Sheriff Acton, sorry enough at the part forced upon him, rode down to give us notice of the sale, which was to take place a fortnight later.

"Though you know, sir," he added to father, "you can easily hold it off for a time, if you wish, by various processes of law."

“How long could it be held off?” asked father.

“Six months readily; perhaps a year. In that time things might take a turn” —

“What turn could they take, sir?”

Acton scratched his head ruefully.

“I don’t know, sir — that’s candid. You might borrow the money.”

“How could I hope to pay it back? Even if I brought myself to borrow, who could lend it to me? Is there any money in Virginia?”

“Mighty little, and that’s a fact,” admitted Acton with a bitter laugh. “Those London fellows have played their cards well. They saw a chance to get even, and made the most of it. They have got together, you know, and practically all the claims are being pressed at once. It’s a sorry business, sir.”

“Yes, a sorry business. We have sown and we must reap — ’t is one of the old laws of nature, Acton, which there is no escaping. I thank you for your suggestion, sir, but I think it best to let the law take its course. The sooner the sore is cut out, the sooner it will heal.”

So the sheriff posted his notice and rode away. All up and down the country others were being posted, and even the greatest families were hard put to it to save themselves from ruin. There was none able to help another, and men must stand by impotent and see their friends made outcast. Yet even to the last, I think, father hoped against hope that some miracle might happen to save the estate for his children, and it was only when the

sheriff began to cry the sale to the little crowd assembled before the house that he despaired. What a little crowd it was! Not a single great planter in it, but Allen was there, some half dozen speculators from Richmond, and a group of idle hangers-on.

"I have a bid on behalf of the creditors for three thousand eight hundred and sixty pounds," said the sheriff. "The place is worth ten thousand pounds, if it is worth a penny, gentlemen. It is a splendid investment, and the only condition to the purchase is that one third the money be paid down with a year's mortgage for the rest. Do we hear another bid?"

No, we did not, strain our ears as we might. I have not the heart to dwell on his appeals and supplications,—it seemed almost that we ourselves were begging,—and in the end the place was knocked down to Allen, and we found ourselves homeless.

Possession need not be given for thirty days, so the sheriff told us, and added a hint that we might take a longer time if we chose. There were many articles of personal property the creditors could not touch. The law reserved us a certain number of the negroes; the horses, house furniture, equipages, and all our personal belongings were still ours, so that we were not nearly so destitute as Sancho Panza, after all. We kept, of course, old Pomp and his wife and their children and grandchildren, and chose our other negroes so that no families might be separated, but despite the fact that the

place would probably remain intact, there was nightly a most doleful wailing in the negro quarters, and no doubt many of our people would have gone to the block in all willingness could they have thereby saved the fortunes of the family. But there is no need for me to dwell on those unhappy days. The most vivid memory of them with me now is of Frederic, brooding in dark corners, sitting for hours on the river bank, eating his heart out because he could do nothing.

The gravest question with us all was whither we should go from Wyndham, and many family councils were held concerning it. Our friends had not forgotten us, for lack of money could not dull the edge of their open-handedness. Mrs. Harrison had driven over a dozen times to urge us to come to her at Berkeley, asserting that it would be an act of kindness to keep her company in the great, lonely house. Our cousin of Turkey Island was no less pressing, and there were many others.

"But we cannot become charges upon our friends," protested father, as we stood beside his chair one evening. "It seems to me that three strong, healthy men should be able to earn a living without asking charity of any one."

He looked up at us with a smile, and I know that my face was beaming at being called a man.

"We could do so in the west, sir," said Frederic quietly. "There must be great need of men there."

"Still on the old theme! You know little of

frontier life, boys. It is well enough for men, perhaps, but for women," — and he drew his wife quickly to him with a gesture that needed no interpreting.

"Oh, no — she should not go!" protested Frederic. "But I — I can go! I can work for us all — it is what I long to do. There must be a thousand chances for a man who would work as I should!"

There were tears of tenderness in his eyes as he looked down at us.

"Dear boy," cried mother, "I do not fear the wilderness. I am quite ready to go, if that be best for us. Hundreds of women are going every year."

"Yes, I know," and father sat stroking her hair gently, "but few such as you, Margaret. If we could leave you here until we had a home prepared, perhaps" —

"But I will not be left! That would be more terrible, dear Chris, than anything the wilderness could offer!"

"Yes," he assented. "Yes, I think it would, sweetheart. But we must soon decide. We are quite ready, you know, to leave Wyndham, and it irks me to stay here in Allen's house."

The darkness had fallen as we talked, and Pomp came in to light the candles. Poor old fellow! He felt the family troubles deeply and his hand had grown very tremulous in the past few weeks. We watched him as he applied the taper and got the wicks to burning, I, at least, thinking

how few times more we should sit here seeing him do it. He had started to shuffle away, when we heard the clatter of horses' hoofs and the roll of heavy wheels up the road.

"'T is Mrs. Harrison," said mother. "I think we shall yet have to yield to her, Chris. Go help her coachman, Pomp."

But that quick step along the hall was not Mrs. Harrison's—it was my dear godfather's. I protest that when he entered at the door it was like the sun coming in.

"Chris! Margaret!"

What a lightening of the heart there was in his very hand-clasp, in the look of his eyes!

"And can you start in the morning, Chris?" he demanded, the next instant.

"Start?" echoed father, in surprise. "Start whither, sir?"

"Why, to Riverview, to be sure—where else, Chris? Dolly has your rooms ready. Ruth is wild to meet her cousins."

"But, my dear sir," protested father, "surely we are already in your debt deep enough! We cannot become charges"—

"Charges!" cried the colonel. "Don't insult me, sir! Guests you mean, dear Chris—very welcome and wished-for guests. Now don't be unkind to me, boy; you have been that already, you and Margaret."

"Unkind!" they repeated, and looked at him astonished.

"Ay—unkind in not letting me know at once

of your trouble. That was not the way to treat me, Chris!"

"Bad news needs no courier, sir. It travels post, God knows!"

"It did not this time, sir! Had I known in time, I might have been of service; now, I fear, it is too late. So your home is on the Potomac, my boy. Pomp," he demanded, "are the boxes packed?"

"Yes, suh!" responded that worthy, his face shining like the full moon. "Been packed dese two days, suh."

"And the house stuff?"

"'Most all boxed up, suh. We kin finish in d' mornin'."

"That's good! Now, Pomp, I'm going to rely on you to help me."

"Yes, suh."

"I want you to have the coach, wagons, everything, hitched up at daybreak. You will load everything on them — and see that nothing's overlooked, you rascal."

"Yes, suh."

"The boxes will be loaded on the light cart, so that they can go right along with the coach. Your wife and all the other women will ride with them in the light wagon."

"Yes, suh."

"You yourself will take charge of the men — the children will go with the women, of course — and will bring them to Riverview as quickly as you can, with the carts and furniture. You know the road?"

"I 's been oveh it a hund'ed times, suh."

"Well, you 'll take food enough along to last you. We 're having good weather now, and you ought to make the trip easily in ten days — say a fortnight at the outside."

"We 'll do it, suh."

"And understand — I 'll hold you responsible."

"I und'stan', suh," said old Pomp proudly, and shuffled away to set his preparations instantly astir.

We had sat, spell-bound, listening to these orders, delivered with a military decision and rapidity, but as Colonel Stewart turned back to us, smiling with satisfaction, father found his tongue.

"My dear sir," he began.

"Not a word!" cried the colonel. "Not one single word! I 've brought my coach, which will hold us all, and we start at sun-up. Now I think it's time for dinner."

There was no resisting him, he was so utterly master of the situation. He had taken our burdens in his hands completely, and for the first time in many days we sat about the table in something like our old spirits. It did me good to see the color again in mother's face and the light in father's eyes.

Sure enough, at sunrise we were bundled into the coach, without time for reflection or looking back, — which was doubtless just what he desired, — and were driven away through an avenue of weeping negroes. We met Mrs. Harrison presently upon the road, — she was coming to renew

her invitation, — and said good-by to her. It was a last good-by, fate willed, for she followed her husband within the year; and there are few sweeter memories in my life than that of their kindly faces, their charming ways, their sweet and winning personalities.

We turned westward up the peninsula, and long ere noon reached Richmond, where we stopped that father might have a last word with Allen. Then the coach turned toward the Potomac, the carts heaped high with boxes and surmounted by the women, rumbling along behind. It was a parting from the old familiar country which touched us all, and even Colonel Stewart could not render the atmosphere within the coach a cheerful one.

“Any plans for the future, Chris?” he asked at last.

Father shook his head.

“I fear not, sir. It has been so sudden — there has been no time for planning.”

“Of course not,” said the colonel instantly. “How foolish of me to ask. Well, you will have plenty of time for planning now, for you will not leave Riverview soon, I promise you.”

“I have a plan, sir,” spoke up Frederic, and the others laughed as they looked at his bright eyes. None of us realized, I think, how far advanced to manhood Frederic really was.

“And what is it, sir?” asked the colonel.

Whereupon Frederic, halting somewhat at first, detailed the enterprise of which we already know.

Colonel Stewart nodded thoughtfully when he had ended.

"You might do worse, Chris," said he, "than to let the boy go out and locate your land."

"But I am going too, sir!" I cried, crimson with anger at the thought that I might be overlooked. "I am quite old enough, and stronger even than Frederic."

"And you know I cannot let the boys go alone, sir," added father quietly.

"Well, Margaret, at least, can stay with us at Riverview," said the colonel.

"Indeed, not!" she cried. "That has all been settled, Colonel Stewart."

He laughed as he looked at her.

"You don't know what you are saying, my dear," he protested. "Think of the Indians."

"I have."

"And of the trip over the mountains."

"I have."

"And of life in a rude cabin in the wilderness."

"I have."

"With perhaps no neighbor within a day's journey; no visitors; no boat from London; no news of the outside world for weeks and weeks."

"I have — I have thought of it all, dear sir."

"And you have concluded" —

"That since we go through this world only once, I'll go through it with my husband."

Colonel Stewart threw up his hands with a comical look of despair.

"No use, Chris," he said. "We are slaves to

our wives. We'll have to find another way. Well, we shall find it," and with that the talk turned to other things.

Good weather had made good roads, so that we pushed forward at a lively pace until an hour after dark, when the lights of Hanover court-house gleamed ahead, and we finally drew up before an inn, which we found a very good one. We had dinner and were soon abed, for there was to be an early start next day, in order that we might sleep at Fredericksburg. Sleep there we did, after a long and wearying day's journey, with no incident to mark it.

"One day more," said Colonel Stewart that night, "and we shall be home. But we'll start at dawn again, remember."

So in the gray light of the morning we were off again, and very weary of it Frederic and I were by the time that evening fell.

"But this is nothing," protested the colonel, laughing at our tired faces, "to what the trip over the mountains would be, boys. Why, this has lasted only three days, while that lasts as many weeks."

"At least it will not be made in a coach, sir," said Frederic.

"No — no such easy way."

"Easy, sir!"

"Yes, easy. You will think so after you have tramped all day, lending a shoulder to the wagons every minute. The trip over the mountains must be made on foot — by men, at least. I have made

it — yes, by the same road that is still used. We hewed out that road, my boy — we of Braddock's army."

"Won't you tell us about it, sir?" asked Frederic, with bright eyes. "It must have been glorious."

"There was little glory got out of that campaign," observed the colonel grimly, and he told us the dismal tale of error and defeat, while we sat spell-bound.

"But they have paid for it — the savages!" I cried, as he ended.

"Paid for what, my boy?"

"For their cruelty — for the torture of those captured soldiers!"

"No, they have never paid for it. Yet I think the French were more to blame than they, for that is savage warfare, and the French looked on without a protest, and, certainly, the French have paid for it. But the Indians have never suffered a great defeat; besides, we cannot kill their women and children. We cannot torture them. Even if we could, they count it a glory to stand smiling at the stake with the fire about them. They are brave men — brave and cruel — and have met with much injustice. There is the Potomac," he added suddenly.

We peered out through the gathering darkness and away to the right caught the gleam of water.

"We shall soon be home," he said, with a sigh of satisfaction. "I'll wager they are expecting us."

So they were, for as we rolled up the broad drive to the house, we could see the windows alight in welcome. We drew up with a flourish before the steps, and as I scrambled out of the coach, I caught a glimpse of two figures running down them.

"Did you bring them, Tom?" cried a clear voice.

"Indeed I did, Dolly," answered the colonel — it gave me quite a turn that any one should dare to call him Tom. "Indeed I did!"

It was mother who flew first to her arms and found comfort in the very touch of them about her. Then it was father's turn, and then mine.

"So this is Stewart!" she was saying. "To think I should never have seen you, and here you are almost as tall as I am, sir! Ruth, come here and kiss your cousins."

Ruth, who had been hugging her father, came forward at the call, and then stopped short as she saw us standing there.

"Why — why," she stammered, "I thought they were quite small!"

"And here they are two genuine young giants!" laughed her father. "Well, I dare say, they will relish a kiss none the less!"

Relish it! I felt my face turn crimson in sympathy with hers, and for the first and last time in my life I suspected her father of a want of tact. But her wits were readier than mine.

"How do you do, cousin?" she said, coming forward very sedately, and giving me her hand. "You are most welcome to Riverview."

I could not find my tongue, and smiling at me with just a touch of malice at my confusion, she turned to Frederic.

"Now come in with us," said Mrs. Stewart. "You must be very weary," and she led the way up the steps, while her husband remained behind to give some orders to the servants.

CHAPTER X

MISTRESS RUTH SINGS US A SONG

DINNER was awaiting us, and our host insisted that we sit down to it at once, after the hastiest toilet.

“Your boxes are not unpacked,” he said, “and cannot be for some time. So let us waive all ceremony and dine as we came from the road.” And as we were in his hands entirely, we obeyed like so many children.

So there, for the first time, I sat down with Mistress Ruth, though not so near her as I could have wished to be. She had her father’s dark eyes, and when they turned in my direction, as they did once or twice, I found them most disquieting. They seemed to have the power to look one through and through, and their mistress was plainly diverted vastly by what they revealed to her when they chanced to rest on me. But she gave me scant attention. She had been seated next to Frederic, — an arrangement for which I suspect she was responsible, — and the two were soon plunged into low-toned talk. But I could look at them ; I could see how his fair comeliness matched her dark beauty ; I could note how his eyes softened and kindled as they dwelt upon her ; and I

fancied I could guess what was passing in both their hearts, even in those first moments, with the prescience of those whom fate has set apart. Well, Frederic was worthy any woman, and as I sat looking at him, proud of his beauty, I wondered that all women did not lay their hearts before him openly. I am sure that I should have done so, had fate made me a woman, certain of finding his tender and sweet and true. I never read the first series of the Sonnets without thinking how aptly they describe him.

We soon found that we had come to a home, indeed. Our rooms were ready for us, and when we mounted to them after dinner, we found the boxes opened and our women waiting.

"What do you think of her, Frederic?" I queried, when we were alone together.

"Think of whom?" he asked.

"There is but one 'whom,'" I laughed. "Mistress Ruth, to be sure."

"I think her a very charming girl," he said quietly, and met my look smilingly, though with a somewhat heightened color.

"Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye?" I began jestingly, but he stopped me with a look.

"It is that I have work to do, Stewart," he said, in a voice that told how much he was in earnest. "And I am more and more convinced that my work lies westward beyond the mountains."

"But they will not let you go," I protested.

"I must go! I could not be so selfish as to stay here idle. I am no child to be coddled and kept

from harm. I am sure Colonel Stewart will approve. Do you remember how he spoke when I told him my plan?"

"Then I will go with you, Frederic!" I cried. "I am no child, neither! I will not be left behind! I will go alone if you leave me!"

He threw his arm about my shoulders with a quick, affectionate gesture.

"You shall go, Stewart," he said. "Something tells me that you shall go. I am sure there need be no fear with me to protect you."

"To protect me!" I cried indignantly. "Look at me, Frederic, and tell me I need protection!"

He did not answer, but turned away, humming softly to himself.

"We must go down," he said at last. "We have loitered here too long already."

So down we went, and found the others already gathered on the veranda.

"Sit down here, boys, and renew your youth," commanded Colonel Stewart. "'T is a night in a thousand."

The yellow moon hung low in the sky, throwing broad streamers of light across the river, which glided past noiselessly as a phantom stream. The fringe of trees along its bank stood out in bold relief, and a hundred yards to the north a dark tangle of shrubbery marked the course of some tributary. The air was sweet with a hundred perfumes, soft as a baby's breath, resonant with the innumerable noises of the darkness, the faint, deep-sounding chorus of frog and owl and insect. We

sat silent, drinking in this beauty, until the moon had sunk behind the trees.

"Come," said our host, rising with a little sigh, "the enchantment's done, the spell is broke, and we were best indoors, for the air is growing chill."

I stood where I was, the better to see Ruth enter the stream of light at the door, and glancing at Frederic, I found him intent on the same spectacle. I could have sworn that she smiled over her shoulder at him, but when we got indoors, we found her bending demurely over her tambour, intent upon her needlework.

"The evening wants but one thing to make it perfect," observed the colonel, as he sank into his chair. "Ruth, will you not sing for us?"

"Of course, dear father," answered that young lady, laying down her frame at once. "But I must have some one to light me."

I would have sprung forward but that her eyes were on Frederic. Plainly I was not in favor, which was no wonder when he was by, so I sat down again where I might watch them. She led the way to the spinet in the corner, he following with lighted candle.

"It was her mother's before her," remarked the colonel, watching her fondly as she took her seat. "But she will never learn to play it as her mother did," he added.

"Nonsense, sir!" cried the mother in question. "She has already far more skill than I."

"Why," he continued, not heeding her, and leaning his head against the chair-back, "I re-

member it used to seem to me it was my very heartstrings she was plucking at."

"And now you are old, sir, 't is only the wire ones yonder that tremble," she retorted. "The fault is not in the instrument nor in the player."

"Perhaps not," said the colonel. "'T is a sad thing to grow old, boys; never do it."

But Mistress Ruth was waiting our pleasure.

"What shall it be, sir?" she asked, looking at him over her shoulder.

"Why, you know my favorite, Ruth. I can't hear it too often, my dear."

She set the sheet on the shelf before her, and directed Frederic how to hold the candle, though she doubtless had no need whatever of it, and touched the chords. Do you know the song? 'T was sung for a sixpence to Olivia's scapegrace uncle, but I hope Olivia herself was listening at the stair-head.

"O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

"What is love? 't is not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure."

"Doth it make your heart beat, Stewart?" asked the colonel.

There was such a weight upon my tongue I could not answer, and such a mist before my eyes I could scarce see the shaking candle in Frederic's fingers. "You are right, my love," said he after a moment, turning back to his wife. "The fault is not in instrument nor player. 'Youth's a stuff will not endure.'"

"But love does," said his wife simply.

"Ay — love does," and he looked gently across at her. "'T is a wonderful thing. Come here and kiss me, sweetheart."

She came at once, quite unashamed, and he put his arm about her and held her so a moment. But Mistress Ruth, alarmed perhaps at the effect of her song upon Frederic, dashed away into the ballad of Sir Dilberry Diddle, and the spell was broken, for one could not choose but laugh at the tale of that gallant captain of militia, who, when "the battle was over without any blows," steps into the coach with his lady.

"John's orders were special to drive very slow,
For fevers oft follow fatigues, we all know,
And, prudently cautious, in Venus's lap,
Beneath her short apron, Mars takes a long nap.

"He dreamt, Fame reports, that he cut all the throats
Of the French as they landed in flat-bottomed boats;
In his sleep if such dreadful destruction he makes,
What havock, ye gods! we shall have when he wakes!"

"Bravo!" cries the colonel. "Come hither and get a kiss, Ruthie. Age hath its privileges, you see," he added, "and another is to go early to bed. I am sure we are all in need of rest. So say good-night, my dears."

Our candles were on the table at the stair-foot, and it was Frederic who lighted Ruth's for her and who bade her good-night last of all. I had never thought to see him such a squire of dames, yet I must confess he carried it off gallantly as any seasoned courtier. We stood looking after her as she went up the stair.

"Just as I looked after you a hundred times, sweetheart," observed the colonel, whose soft heart was ever alert for passages at love. And we, in some confusion, woke from our dreams and sought our room.

Somehow I could not jest with Frederic now. I feared that I might touch too closely, and so we went to bed in silence. It was only after the light was out that he spoke.

"And you still wish to go west with me, Stewart?" he asked.

"With all my heart. And you?"

"I more than ever. I will speak to Colonel Stewart in the morning," he added quietly.
"Good-night."

CHAPTER XI

WE FIND AN ALLY

FREDERIC was ever for doing a thing hot on the moment of inception, and so next morning, sure enough, we knocked at the door of Colonel Stewart's office. His voice bade us enter, and we found him seated before a wide table, engaged with a great mass of papers.

"If you are busy, sir, we will not intrude," began Frederic, hesitating on the threshold.

"I am not busy — not especially so," said the colonel. "Come in, both of you."

"We wished to talk with you, sir, about our journey westward," continued Frederic.

"So you have determined to make it?" asked the colonel quietly.

"You know, sir, I am a boy no longer," said Frederic.

"Nor am I," I interjected.

"And it is time I was doing something. Why, at my age, Colonel Stewart, you had taken part in two campaigns!"

"Ay; but we began young fifty years ago."

"While I have done nothing save idle over my books at home."

"Nor have I," I said.

"You might both have done much worse," observed the colonel.

"Now this thing lies plain before me," added Frederic. "Do you not think it best that I should go, sir?"

"That we both should go?" I corrected.

Colonel Stewart sat looking at us a moment without answering.

"It is not to be denied," he said at last, "that the great future of the country lies in the west, and that those who are first on the ground will, in the end, reap the richest harvest. As for the danger" —

"As for the danger, sir," interrupted Frederic impetuously, "shall we admit that we are more cowardly than the thousands who have gone before?"

"No," said Colonel Stewart, smiling, "we will admit nothing of the sort. Besides, there is rumor of a new treaty with the Indians which will open more of their lands to us, and do away with any possibility of war. There are many good men already in the northwest. General St. Clair is governor of the territory, as you know, and a letter from me to him may be of service to you. General Putnam is there, and Winthrop Sargent and Colonel Crary and Colonel Stacey and Colonel May and many others, — most of them veterans of the revolution, and ruined by it, so that in their age they are compelled to seek new fortunes, — so I see no reason to fear an Indian rising, even should one occur. I have two land warrants in

my own right, one of eight hundred acres in Dinwiddie's grant to the Virginia soldiers who served with Braddock, and another of five thousand in the reserve for the Continental Line. Both of these you could take with you, so you see that I, too, have some interest in your going."

Frederic's face had grown brighter and brighter as this discourse proceeded. As for me, my heart was singing.

"So you approve, sir?" he demanded eagerly.

"Yes, I approve," answered the colonel slowly, "under certain conditions that I will think upon. I believe I can win the consent of your parents, but you must be patient. You can promise me that, I think?"

"Promise you!" cried Frederic, seizing his hand. "We will promise you anything, dear sir!" and we left the room, walking on air.

"Let us go somewhere and talk it over," I suggested, and with common consent we turned toward the river.

Just at the point where the bank sloped on one side to the river and on the other to the quiet waters of an inlet, two lofty oaks sprang upward, side by side, their branches interlacing in affectionate embrace. We walked slowly toward them, deep in our plans, and it was not until we got quite near that we perceived a seat had been built between them, and that it was at this moment occupied.

"Good-morning, sirs!" cried Mistress Ruth, for she it was. "I trust you slept well your first night at Riverview?"

"Too well, I fear," laughed Frederic, "since we were too late for morning prayers, or to have the pleasure of your company at breakfast."

"I have so many duties," she said sedately, "that I must be early astir. But will you not sit down, sirs?"

Now the seat, though comfortable enough for two, was, I thought, scarce long enough for three, so I sat me down upon the ground while Frederic took the place beside her. After all, I told myself, since it was this rôle of looker-on, of foil for the principals, I was to play through all the acts of the comedy, it was as well that chance compelled me to assume it without delay, that I might grow quite perfect in the part.

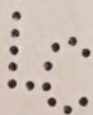
"And what are these duties that compel such early rising?" queried Frederic. "Is it the tambour, or the spinet?"

"'T is neither, sir!" she cried indignantly. "These two years past have I been given the care of the linen and of the house. Dear mother has the storeroom and kitchen, which are quite enough. Father wished her relieved of a part of her burden; besides, he said, the experience would stand me in good stead when — when" —

"When you come to have a house of your own," prompted Frederic, as she stammered and grew red. "And when may that be, cousin?"

"You grow impertinent, sir!"

"Will it be on the James or the Potomac — perhaps on the York — perhaps even on the Rapahannock?" he persisted.



She shut her lips together very tightly, and rose without answering. But Frederic had her by the hand before she had taken a second step.

"Pardon, dear cousin," he pleaded. "My tongue ran away with my wits, as it hath a way of doing sometimes. Say that you pardon me!"

And tender-hearted Ruth forgave him directly, and sat down again beside him.

"There, I have forgot my kerchief!" she cried. "I must get it!"

"Can I not get it?" asked Frederic. "Do you remember where you left it?"

"Let me see," and she looked out over the water, her eyes bright with mischief. "I think you will find it, sir, on the window-seat in the hall; if not there, on the spinet. If it is n't there, one of the house-girls will give you another, which you may bring to me."

Frederic was off in a moment, and it was not till then that it occurred to me that I should have offered to go—that perhaps it was a ruse to get me out of the way, and had failed through my obtuseness.

"The ground is very hard, is it not, cousin?" asked a voice.

"No harder than the seat," I answered shortly, impatient with myself for being so stupid.

"But the attitude cannot be comfortable."

"No," I began, when something in her voice made me look up at her.

She was laughing down at me, while with her kerchief she flicked a speck of dust from her sleeve.

I groaned in spirit.

“So it was a ruse! I thought so. You must deem me very stupid, cousin Ruth!”

“Stupid?” she echoed, affecting to look astonished. “Pray, why?”

“Why? Oh, you need to ask! But I had n’t the sense to see it was I whom you wished to get rid of, and so sat still while Frederic went on that fool’s errand!”

For an instant longer she stared down at me, then burst into such a peal of laughter that I could not choose but join her — though very rueful mirth it was on my part. Few men can laugh gracefully at their own expense.

“Come, sit here, sir,” she commanded, when she regained breath to speak. “Since my ruse, as you call it, miscarried, at least you can talk to me about your brother until he returns, that the time may pass as pleasantly as possible.”

“Gladly,” I assented, and took the place beside her, my heart full of him. “You remember in the *Thousand and One Nights* the heroes and heroines are compared always to the moon — the ‘shining full moon,’ or ‘the splendid full moon,’ or ‘like the moon when it appeareth in its fourteenth night’? Well, I always think of Frederic as like that.”

“Like the moon!” she laughed lightly. “But Frederic is tall and slender — while the moon — the full moon — why, you are more like that, cousin!”

“Like the moon in beauty and brightness,” I

said, nettled somewhat at her mirth. "Surely, you can see that."

"But the moon is so cold," she protested. "And so inconstant, Juliet calls it. I should not wish to be likened to the moon, sir, — more especially not to the full moon. Such a shape!"

I could never bear being laughed at, and I knew she was laughing at me now, — besides, no one likes to have his gods derided, — so I sat silent, looking out over the river and wishing heartily that Frederic had not left us.

"And then she is called so many other dismal names," continued my tormentor. "The lonely moon, the pale-faced moon, the envious moon, the ghostly moon — I am sure I would not wish to be lonely, or pale-faced, or envious!"

Here was she making a jest of me, and I could think of no retort that was not discourteous, or worse! So I kept my face obstinately toward the river, and there was a little silence. But how well she knew her poet!

"Here comes your brother," she said suddenly, and whisked her kerchief out of sight. "Mind, sir, there is to be no word about that unfortunate ruse of mine. And I am sorry I teased you, cousin; only," she added, "a fair mark is such a great temptation!"

He had brought her another dainty square of linen, and she took it from him with such pretty thanks that had I not known better, I would have sworn her heart was in them. I was determined

to be a spoil-sport no longer, and so took myself off with some excuse, and walked slowly back to the house, pondering on the perverseness of women and on my own hard fate. *Virtute sua* — but what sorry comfort that sometimes is!

CHAPTER XII

OUR ALLY WINS OUR BATTLE

COLONEL STEWART was of the old régime, and despite the church's disestablishment and decay, held rigidly to her offices, reading the lessons from an old and much-thumbed Bible which had been given him by the pastor of his boyhood. I know it has been the fashion to hold up our old society to scorn and execration, as one of horse-racing, cock-fighting, gambling and wine-bibbing, a single Squire Western serving to set the reputation of a whole county. Yet in many households the standard of living would have done no dishonor to Puritan New England; that they had grown somewhat rare of recent years was due more to the actions of the clergy than to any other cause; yet even their license and ribaldry and drunkenness could not shake the elders, who had been reared under godlier instruction.

Another thing in which our household stood somewhat unique was its library of near five hundred volumes, one of the largest on the Northern Neck, brought from England in Colonel Stewart's boyhood. It was there I spent a great part of my time, in the succeeding days, and Frederic often joined me, somewhat to my surprise. At last I

dared to hint that to my mind he might be much more pleurably employed in amusing Mistress Ruth.

“Why,” he grumbled, “she sent me about my business half an hour since, Stewart. She has so many duties to occupy her that there is little enough time left for idling — which cannot be said of us,” he added, in another tone. “Then she varies so, I scarce know how to take her — only this I know, that her wit is infinitely quicker than my own — I have proved that ruefully a score of times.”

“Plague on her! She has baited me, too. I fear she is spiteful, Frederic.”

“No, not that — nothing mean nor selfish. Only, I think, she finds the company of two slow, stupid fellows like ourselves a little wearing.”

I gazed at him in astonishment over my book, and saw he was in earnest.

“Ay, it is true, Stewart,” he said, smiling at my look. “We have seen very little of the world, you know, and have met few people in it. Wits need rubbing to be brightened.”

“Well, we shall soon see more of it, I trust; and then, perhaps, we may hope to measure ourselves with these chits of sixteen. Has she seen the world?”

“No; women seem not to have the need that men have. They get it, somehow, out of their inward selves.”

“And then they have this great advantage,” I added, “that we may not retort for fear of wound-

ing them, while they thrust the knife into us as viciously as they can."

"Poor boy! And did she use you so cruelly?" he asked.

"'Tis not for myself I am complaining — only you must confess it true — they continually cry for quarter, yet give none."

He looked at me curiously for a moment without answering, and then turned away to the window, where he stood tapping on the pane and gazing out across the fields. I went back to the book, but found the letters dancing before my eyes, and after a vain attempt to go on with my reading, I laid it down and left the room, angry with myself, but more angry with the jade who seemed to be coming between us. I started through the hall to get my hat, and came upon Mistress Ruth herself in the window-seat, bending over some bit of finery. She nodded coolly as I passed, and turned back to her work, but some imp of perverseness prompted me to stop before her.

"So," I said, "this was the important duty that would not brook disturbance!"

She looked up at me with eyes wide open.

"I do not understand you, sir," she said.

"Nor I you," I retorted impatiently. "Why do you object to Frederic?"

"So he has been complaining!" she said, with a little sneer.

I saw my error then, too late.

"No, he has not been complaining; that is not his way. If you only knew him" —

"I do know him!" she cried, "and I assure you that I am far from thinking him a god out of Olympus!"

There was a fire in her eyes as she looked up at me that I found myself dwelling on with delight. But she dropped them again in an instant, and I shook myself together.

"I was going for a walk," I said inanely, striving to conquer temptation and muster courage to tear myself away.

"Very well," and she went steadily on with her stitching.

"I should think such delicate needlework must be very bad for the eyes," I continued, surrendering completely to the devil and hating myself for it.

"I have heard so," she answered curtly.

"Perhaps a walk in the open air would be of benefit," I suggested, throwing discretion quite overboard.

She looked up at me again and this time her eyes were beaming.

"If I consent to go, will you promise to say not a word about your great god's virtues?" she asked.

"I promise," I said, sending honor after discretion, and thinking perjury, for the moment, a small offense.

"Then wait a moment, sir," and she ran to get her bonnet.

The air was soft and warm, with the magic of the spring in it, and it seemed that one might

almost hear in the wood the rising of the sap, the bursting of the buds. We walked a little way along the river, she telling me something of her home-life and of the neighbors; especially of a certain very famous one, with whom her father had been for years on terms of closest friendship. General Washington, it seemed, lived only a few miles up the river at his estate, Mount Vernon.

"But you will not have the privilege of seeing him," she added, "for he is at New York."

"But I have already seen him," and I told her of that day at Yorktown.

"I love to talk of him," she said, when I had finished. "He is so head and shoulders above all other men."

"So there is one man, at least, worth talking of," I said, thinking that perhaps, to stay some stings of conscience, I might yet bring the talk around to Frederic.

"Yes, one," she retorted, darting a glance at me, "but I know no boy worthy of two words."

We had reached the seat at the river bank, which seemed the natural Mecca of all such pilgrimages, and she sat down, motioning me to the place beside her. As I laid my hand upon the arm, my fingers felt a little roughness there, and after idling over it a moment, I looked to see what it might be. It seemed to be a monogram, but so worn I could not decipher it. I looked up to see Ruth watching me with a little smile.

"What is it?" I asked.

"'Tis my mother's love-token to my father. A

heart, encircling a T and a D, the initials of their names. She cut it there while he was away at the wars, and he found it when he came home and thought her taken from him."

I looked again at the carving and then out across the water, not daring to speak the words that trembled on my lips. Even as I gazed, a great ship sailed slowly into sight around a point far down the stream, and held straight for us before the wind.

"Look!" I cried. "Who is she, cousin Ruth?"

She sprang upon the bench that she might have a better view, and gazed at the ship long and earnestly.

"I do not know," she said at last. "I have never before seen her. But let us call the others — my father may know."

So I ran to the house and summoned them, a crowd of idle house-servants following us down to the water's edge. The ship was almost opposite us, and we could see the people aboard her waving their hats to us, while a cheer came faintly across the water. We answered to the limit of our lungs, the negroes doing good service.

"I know not what ship she is," said the colonel, as she sailed slowly past, "but she is doubtless bound for Alexandria."

"And see, papa," cried Ruth, "there is another!"

And there, indeed, another was, just coming into view. She passed us like the first, her passengers,

of whom there seemed a great number, cheering us as the others had done. She was scarcely by when a third appeared, and then a fourth, while we watched them in amazement.

"They are not ships of war," said the colonel, "or I should say the British were upon us again. Stay — I did hear a month back that a party of French was expected, who had bought land on the Ohio, but I did not credit the story. Perhaps these are the very Frenchmen."

"If they be not afraid to enter the wilderness," began Frederic, "why should we?"

"Perhaps they know nothing of what is before them," replied father. "How could they, coming over-sea, from a land where every rood maintains its man?"

"Or perhaps they have found their ills at home greater than any others they could fear," said the colonel quietly. "They are a gallant, fearless people. Contact with the wilderness cannot harm them. Let us ride over to Alexandria to-morrow and see them, Chris."

"My own thought, sir."

"May we not go with you, sir?" asked Frederic, — a question which had been hot upon my tongue.

"Why, yes, surely," laughed the colonel. "'Tis time you youngsters were getting out into the world. What say you, Chris — shall the boys go?"

"As you please, sir," answered father. "Perhaps you are right; we may have kept them too long in leading-strings."

I saw mother's anxious glance run over us, as though she scented some danger in the words; but she said nothing, thinking, perhaps, that it were best to let sleeping dogs lie. Colonel Stewart, however, plainly thought the hour of action was at hand, and he returned to the charge that very evening as we sat about the candles.

"I think you were right this afternoon, Chris," he began, "when you said that you had kept the boys too long in leading-strings. Frederic tells me he will soon be twenty, and Stewart is but three years younger. They are nearly men in years, but they will be men in little else so long as you keep them tied at home."

I bit my lips to steady them, and I could see Frederic's hand trembling on his chair-arm.

"No," assented father, "perhaps not."

"There is only one forge in which real men are wrought," added the colonel. "That is the world. It is a great crucible, which will discover the best that is in a man. You must not be selfish, Chris; you must let the boys go out and touch elbows with their fellows."

The alarm in mother's eyes had deepened from the first moment of this conversation. She looked across at Mrs. Stewart for sympathy, but I fancy the colonel had already given his wife her cue.

"He is right, dear Margaret," she said.

"Oh, but you have no boys," cried mother, "and there is no need that girls should go out into the world."

"No, thank God! Yet if I had a son, I think

I should want him to make the best of himself, Margaret — more especially if he was such as yours.”

It was an adroit bit of flattery, and mother smiled over it, though the iron was in her heart.

“Perhaps you are right, dear madam,” she murmured, “but what is your plan, sir?” and she turned anxious eyes upon our host. “I know you have a plan; and I know, too, that none of us will say you nay.”

I gripped my chair to keep myself upon it, else must I have gone capering along the hall for very joy.

“My plan,” said the colonel simply, “is to send these boys forward to the Ohio country to place our claims — for you know I have one, Chris — and to look about them. Even if nothing more comes of it, the trip will be well worth taking, for our land, to be of value, cannot be too soon located.”

“But the danger,” began mother.

“The danger, my dear, has been much overstated. Besides, the arrival of these French has made the way quite easy. Let us send the boys with them, and there can be no possible danger. I will give them a letter to General St. Clair at Fort Harmer, and I am sure they will be as safe with him as they are sitting here with us.”

The color came back to mother’s face again, and I could hear her draw a long breath of relief.

“Perhaps I have been foolish,” she said, “but the thought of them starting alone upon so long a

journey frightened me. If you advise it, sir, and the boys still wish to go, I have nothing more to say."

Wish to go! She had only to look at our shining faces to have that question answered.

"There is another objection," said father slowly. "The cost of a trip over the mountains must be considerable, and I fear" —

"Tut, tut!" cried the colonel, holding up his hand. "Are they not going on my behalf as well as yours? Do not think me wholly selfish, sir! The least I could do would be to bear whatever expenses they incur."

So was our battle won!

CHAPTER XIII

NEW FRIENDS

IT was scarce nine o'clock next morning when we cantered into the old town, and leaving our horses at the inn, made our way down to the waterfront. The French, for it was indeed they who had arrived, had not yet disembarked. Their ships had just been warped inshore, and it seemed that all Alexandria had gathered to stare at the strangers.

"The very man I want!" cried a short, stout, red-faced little man, seizing Colonel Stewart by the arm, as we pushed our way through the crowd. "We're in the devil of a mess, sir, for here has Colonel Franks, who was sent hither to receive these good people, posted off to New York, thinking they had made that port instead of this. 'Twill be a fortnight ere we can get him back again."

"Well, and what then?" asked the colonel.

"Well, sir, we cannot let them pine away on board ship so long, so we have agreed to receive and entertain them until they are ready to start westward."

"And very kind of you!" cried the colonel, nodding to three or four other men who had gathered about the speaker.

"Why, sir, nothing more than just," said one of them. "We have not forgotten Yorktown."

"Right!" and the colonel shook hands with him. "Have you given them this invitation?"

"We were just discussing the best way to do it, sir."

"And would like to place the matter in your hands, sir," added the first speaker.

"Very well; let us go aboard," said the colonel, "and see what we can do toward straightening out the coil. But first let me introduce you to Major Randolph and his two sons, Mr. Dodds. Mr. Dodds is mayor of Alexandria," he added.

We exchanged greetings with him and with the others, who were the members of his council, and we could judge by their bearing in how great esteem they held Colonel Stewart and any friends of his.

"Which is the chief ship?" asked the colonel.

"The Belle Esprit, here," said Mr. Dodds. "You will accompany us, gentlemen, I hope?" he added. "I am anxious to make these poor people feel wholly welcome." And we fell gladly in with the suggestion.

We were soon on board, and Colonel Stewart asked to see the chief among the colonists. One of the crew hurried away to the cabin, whence there presently emerged a very handsome gentleman with white hair and mustachios, and dressed with great care and brilliance.

"Je suis tres heureux," began Colonel Stewart painfully.

"I speak English, sir," interrupted the other smilingly, "and am pleased always at opportunity to improve it."

"Faith, I'm glad to hear it," laughed the colonel. "My French is of the camp and goes haltingly upon three legs. My name is Stewart, sir, and I came aboard with these gentlemen to bid you welcome to this country, where your people will be ever remembered with gratitude and affection."

"And I am le Comte de Barth," returned the other, bowing and taking the outstretched hand, "and very happy to meet you, sir."

We were presented to him in turn, and for each of us he had a pleasant word.

"Your destination, I hear, is the Ohio country," said the colonel, when the introductions had been made.

"Yes — the Ohio. But, gentlemen, you must with me come to the cabin and meet my compatriots. We have need of counsel, which a glass of wine cannot but improve."

We followed him into the cabin, and there were presented to the Marquis Lezay-Marnesia and M. Paul Thiebaut, who, with M. le Comte, were, it seemed, the leaders of the expedition. Corks popped in a moment, and they pledged us with a grace quite fascinating.

"And first, gentlemen," said Colonel Stewart, when that ceremony was ended, "Mr. Dodds here has commissioned me, on behalf of the people of Alexandria, to invite you to be their guests until

such time as you are ready to start westward. The agent of the Scioto company, who was to have met you here, has gone to New York through some mistake, and you must be detained here some little time."

"A thousand thanks, monsieur," answered the Frenchman, and translated the invitation to the others with a rapidity of utterance which seemed to me quite unintelligible; but they evidently understood and were profuse in their acknowledgments.

"We have felt," said M. le Comte, "that in coming to Amérique we were coming among friends. Our country and your own have been so close together in the past, and our sympathies are so closely intertwined, that we have left our homes without regret — the more so since, for the moment, the happy star of France is clouded."

"What is your number, sir?" asked the colonel.

"We shall have about five hundred when we are all arrived. There is another ship yet upon the way."

"And do they know anything of the life of the frontier?"

"Very little, I fear. Most of them come from Paris."

"But they doubtless have useful trades?"

"Oh, yes; almost all have trades. We have with us ten carvers in wood, five peruke-makers, ten musicians, ten coach-makers, seven gilders, six makers of lace, three friseurs, ten barbers, three

clock-makers, two artisans, two sculpteurs, two ébenistes — I know not your word for it — three maîtres de danse” —

He had proceeded with this list so calmly that Colonel Stewart had for the moment merely stared at him, thinking, perhaps, that he was jesting; but it dawned on him at last that the speaker was in earnest.

“But, my dear sir,” he burst out, “what occupation will gilders find in the wilderness, where there is nothing to gild; or coach-makers, where there are no roads; or architects, where the greatest edifice is a log cabin; or wig-makers, when it is all a man can do to keep his own hair safe from the savages? Tell me, rather, can they wield an axe? Are they skilled with the rifle? Those are the things that count, for with the axe they must clear their land before they can plant it; and upon the rifle they must depend largely for food until their crops mature.”

It was the Frenchman’s turn to stare.

“I am not sure that I understand you wholly, monsieur,” he said after a moment. “Did you say that our land is not yet cleared?”

“Assuredly not — not a rod of it!” snorted the colonel. “There’s not an acre of cleared land north of the Ohio save right about the military posts.”

“But our maps no say not so!” protested the other, forgetting his idioms in the excitement of the moment.

“Your maps? Let me see them, sir.”

A great map was taken from a case upon the wall and spread carefully upon the table. Colonel Stewart ran his finger over it.

“‘Habité et défriché,’” he read. “Inhabited and cleared.” And again, farther down, “‘Inhabited and cleared; building stone, lead mines, salt springs, coal mines.’ Why, this makes it a very paradise ready for man’s coming!” and he continued his examination, but I could see from his shaking hand how deeply he was moved. At last he looked up at us with such a light in his eyes as I had never seen there. “Gentlemen,” he said, “there is no need that I should mince my words. This map is the most outrageous of impostures. All this land which is marked ‘settled and cleared’ is, with the exception of a few acres along the river, a howling wilderness, a virgin forest, where not a white man lives, given over entirely to the Indians. May I ask, sir, where you got this map?”

“The map is a copy of that used in Paris by Monsieur Barlow, the agent of the company,” answered M. le Comte, trying to speak calmly, but with livid face. “If they have deceived us, pardieu! they shall answer for it!” and as I looked into his eyes I thought that Barlow might count himself fortunate that the broad ocean rolled between him and his victims.

“I am sure,” began Colonel Stewart quickly, his own anger cooling somewhat at sight of theirs, “that the members of the company in this country could not have been parties to the swindle. I

know many of them personally for honorable men who would scorn such meanness. You may rest assured, sir, that they will do their utmost to get justice done you."

"I will believe you, sir!" cried the other. "I still trust that we have come to a land of friends. Many of us have invested our whole fortune in this venture. We have bought large tracts of this land, which, we are told, must become very valuable."

"So it must," admitted the colonel. "There can be no doubt of that. But it will be a matter of many years, sir; very many years, I fear. Still it is not for me to discourage you. This is your town, is it — here opposite the mouth of the Kana-wha?"

"Yes; Première Ville — though I think we shall name it Gallipolis. The company has agreed to have houses prepared for us by the time we arrive."

"The company will keep its agreements, sir," said the colonel, "so far as lies in its power. You may rely upon that. But what I came here for principally was to ask your permission that these two young men accompany your party on the trip across the mountains."

"Most willingly," rejoined the other, with the utmost heartiness. "We shall be very glad to have them."

"Thank you, sir. They have some land to locate in the west," explained the colonel, "and I will make bold to give them a letter to General

St. Clair, the governor of the territory, which may be of service to you."

"You are too kind, sir. I begin to see we shall have need of friends."

"We all of us need them," rejoined the colonel, smiling, not choosing to see the Frenchman's meaning, and we took our leave soon after, Mr. Dodds repeating the invitation that the colonists become the guests of the Alexandrians.

All on the homeward way, Colonel Stewart was fuming openly at the trickery which had got these poor Parisians to tempt the perils of the west.

"They will be the merest babes in the wood," he declared. "A pretty way for us to repay the confidence they have in us!"

Nor was his anger lessened when he learned, some days later, that the land sold to the French did not belong to the Scioto associates at all, being some miles beyond their purchase. A committee composed of the three gentlemen we had met on shipboard was appointed to investigate this question. They waited on Colonel Duer, who was the head and front of the enterprise, and that gentleman assured them that though the land still belonged to the government, there could be no doubt that title would be granted by the Congress at its coming session; and thus enheartened, they pushed forward the preparations for the westward journey.

As for ourselves, we had little preparation to make. The most of it fell to the women, who insisted that we must have a complete new ward-

robe, since Heaven alone knew when we should be able to replenish it. Both Colonel Stewart and father had secured their warrants from the register of public lands, and these important documents, together with letters to General St. Clair and General Putnam and a supply of money, were lodged safely in a wallet and intrusted to Frederic's keeping.

But the arrangements for the great body of colonists could not be made so easily, and the whole of June dragged by. We were back and forth to Alexandria often, and finally determined to remain there that we might grow better acquainted with our new companions and assist them in every way we could. We found among them many lovely people, none more so than Dr. Saugrain, his wife and daughter, with whom, it chanced, we were thrown much in contact. The little inn had been quite filled with the more wealthy of the adventurers, who had left their poorer followers to partake of private hospitality, so that Frederic and I were forced to seek for entertainment elsewhere. It was fat Mr. Dodds who finally took us in, and we found M. Saugrain and his family already domiciled with him.

That sprightly little man — he could reach at utmost no more than four feet six — had already set up his chemical apparatus in a small apartment, and I spent many hours there watching with astonishment the miracles he performed with blow-pipe and crucible, and incidentally gaining some slight knowledge of his tongue. His wife and his

daughter, Suzanne, brought their work sometimes and came to chatter with him. What a triumph it was when I found myself able to understand a word here and there! Suzanne, too, was picking up from me a little painful English.

"Vous comprenez, monsieur," she would say, "zat I no long can be une Parisienne — je suis d'Amérique. So I vish de langue it to learn."

As I read it over, what a libel is that sentence on her soft, fluent, delicious utterance! I shall not again try to indicate it, for the task is worse than useless.

But about the doctor. I think good Mr. Dodds was inclined at first to think him in league with the devil, such wonders did he perform, but the little man's kindness and sweetness of temper would disarm any suspicion. He made little phosphorus matches, and had a dozen wooden swans which would swim around in a basin of water, governed, I suppose, by a magnet. His blowpipe was a veritable magic wand, and Suzanne, her black eyes dancing, would sit and laugh at me as I stared at him, and make biting little remarks to her mother anent the denseness of the Americans.

Another woman came into our lives there, too, though into Frederic's more than mine. M. le Comte de Barth had duly introduced us to his son, M. Bourogne, and to his daughter, Mademoiselle Élise, remarking with a shrug that it was only the desperate condition of affairs at home which had persuaded him to bring her on this voyage. The fourth member of his household was an elderly

sister or cousin, I know not which, who acted as duenna to the girl — if sitting by sound asleep can be said to constitute the duty of that office. We sometimes went together to call upon them at the little house just beyond the inn which M. le Comte had secured, and one morning as we entered the house, we heard the sharp clash of steel from the garden back of it. In a moment, Mademoiselle Élise entered, rosy and panting, a foil in her hand.

“It is the hour of my leçon d’escrime,” she explained. “Would messieurs care to come into the garden?”

“Indeed we should!” responded Frederic eagerly.

“Perhaps monsieur fences?” she suggested, seeing the light in his eyes.

“Very poorly, I fear,” said Frederic.

“You must permit me to judge,” she laughed, as we followed her.

“But first, let me present you to the best tireur d’armes in Paris — M. le Vicomte de Malartie, these are two friends of mine, Messieurs Randolph and Rohlman.”

Malartie bowed.

“I have asked M. Rohlman for the honor of crossing with him,” she added. “May he have your foil, monsieur?”

Malartie, with an amused smile, handed his foil to Frederic. He had worn neither mask nor pad, but he motioned to where they lay on a nearby bench. Frederic shook his head.

"No, thank you," he said, and he took his place opposite Mademoiselle Élise, determined, no doubt, to use her very tenderly. They saluted, their blades touched, and the next instant, as it seemed to me, his flew from his hand, and she was laughing merrily into his chagrined eyes.

"It is a trick!" she cried. "M. de Malartie taught it me."

Frederic picked up his foil and turned back to her with a very red face.

"It is a good trick, mademoiselle," he said. "I must get M. le Vicomte to teach it to me also."

They crossed again, but plainly he was not her equal in the art. How could he be when he had had no better master than my father, who, in the rough school of camp and battle, had long forgot the niceties of play? So, after a time, he grew weary of the game and stepped back with a little laugh.

"I salute you," he said. "You have shown me, mademoiselle, what a bungler I am."

He gave the foil to Malartie, and sank down on the bench beside me. In the moments that followed, we both of us, I think, gained for the first time some understanding of the subtleties of the art. The foil, in Malartie's hand, became a living thing, frail, quivering, light as a reed; yet, on occasion, a very wall of steel before him. It was plain enough why he wore no mask, — he needed none with that defense. Yet did the girl, too, compel our admiration, she was so quick, so deft, so fertile in resource. The color flamed high in her

cheeks and the light in her eyes; her hair, loosened by her rapid movements, fell like a golden cloud about her face. So they went back and forth, a sight for gods to look at, until, of a sudden, her blade flashed past Malartie's like a lightning stroke, and she sprang back with a little cry of triumph.

"Touché!" he cried. "Mes compliments! I wondered, mademoiselle, if you would see the opening. That thrust was a masterpiece. Did you not think so, messieurs?"

"Indeed, yes!" said Frederic, drawing a deep breath. "That was the finest sight, sir, that I have ever looked upon. I would give my soul, I think, could I handle the rapier so."

"The skill may be had at a far lighter price," laughed Mademoiselle de Barth. "As you are to accompany us to the west, I am sure Monsieur le Vicomte will find many opportunities to instruct you."

"Oh, if he would!" cried Frederic, with glowing face. "But I fear that would be asking too much of you, monsieur, and I have no way to repay you."

"I should be delighted," said the Frenchman, bowing. "With monsieur's lightness of figure and length of reach, he should make a good swordsman. As for pay, monsieur's friendship will be pay enough."

Frederic held out his hand eagerly, and so the compact was sealed. Almost every morning after that he was off to profit by Malartie's teaching.

I went with him once or twice, but soon found that I was only in the way ; and so it came to pass that I sat often with the little doctor and his family, wondering at his experiments, and at the immeasurable cheerfulness with which he looked forward to the long journey which lay before him.

For the day was drawing near when that journey was to commence, and at last Frederic and I rode back together to Riverview to bid adieu to the dear people there.

CHAPTER XIV

I PLAY THE FOOL

IT was good to be at home, and to sit down again in our familiar places. As I looked at the others, one by one, I fancied that father and mother both seemed in better spirits than I had seen them since we had driven away from Wyndham; while, on the contrary, Mistress Ruth appeared to have grown more pensive.

"And what think you of the French, boys?" asked our host, smiling down upon us from the table-head.

"A kindly people," said Frederic, "with a courage beyond the reach of fear."

"Whose women can give us lessons with the small-sword," I added, not sorry at the chance to give Frederic a gentle prod concerning Mademoiselle Élise, of whom I was growing somewhat jealous. "At least I saw one of them disarm Frederic very neatly."

"Let us have the story, Stewart," commanded the colonel, and I told it, with such adornments as the invention of the moment permitted.

"Well, 't is no disgrace to be disarmed by such a woman," laughed the colonel, when I had ended. "Still I trust you have improved your play, my boy."

"I have done my best, sir," answered Frederic.

"I had a Frenchman for a teacher, too," and our host's voice took a reminiscent tinge, "a soldier of fortune, and I found the knowledge useful, — though not against the Indians."

"It is not against the Indians, sir, that I expect to use it," said Frederic quietly.

"But has Stewart, here, with his soft heart, had no escapades?" demanded the colonel. "Was there no fair damsel to lead him captive?"

"Indeed there was!" and it was Frederic's turn. "A black-eyed maid named Suzanne. He is quite fast in the coils."

I saw Ruth look suddenly at me from across the table.

"I always did like black eyes," I said tentatively.

"Hear the boy!" laughed our host. "He talks like a connoisseur. You had best beware of this black-eyed fairy, Stewart; Suzanne seems to me a very dangerous name for any girl to have. And that reminds me," he added, "I intend to have your friends here for my guests before they start westward. When think you that will be?"

"Within the week, sir," answered Frederic. "Not later, certainly."

"Then I will ride after them to-morrow," said the colonel, who was nothing if not a man of action; and next morning, sure enough, off he went, taking the great coach with him, and warning his wife to be prepared for a half dozen guests at the least.

I went to the library for a last browse among

the volumes there, and presently, from the window, I caught a glimpse of Ruth and Frederic walking along the avenue afar off, deep in talk. I watched them until they passed from sight among the trees, and then turned ruefully back to my page. 'T is indeed a bitter thing to look at happiness through another's eyes — as the Master has said before me.

After that the day dragged drearily enough, for the books had lost their savor, and I was warm and restless. Frederic came into the library after lunch, but he, too, seemed distraught, and soon wandered out again. I saw him ride forth presently, and wondered that I myself had not thought of that method of driving away the blues. I leaned out over the window-seat looking after him, when a step in the room behind me brought me round with a start.

"Oh, is it you, cousin?" cried a voice. "I thought you had gone riding."

"'T was Frederic who went riding," I said; and could not resist adding, "unfortunately."

She sank into a chair with a little sigh.

"It is very warm," she said. "Do you not think so, cousin?"

"Yes, — very warm," I assented shortly.

"And we are to have all those horrid Frenchmen here to-night."

"They are not horrid," I protested hotly. "You will be the last to call them so."

"Nor the Frenchwomen, either?" she questioned scornfully.

"No, nor the Frenchwomen, either! I am sure that I have found them far from horrid."

"But do you not think it bold," she persisted, "that a girl should play at fencing with a man?"

A sudden light broke upon me, and I laughed as I looked at her. So she was jealous of Frederic! Well, she would get small comfort from me.

"I thought it splendid the only time I ever saw it," I answered, "though it has probably occurred since a hundred times. I remember Frederic said it was the finest sight he had ever looked upon."

"Did he, indeed!" and her lip curled disdainfully.

"And you would have said so, too," I went on, bent on turning the knife in the wound, to ease my own pain a little at the sight of hers, "Mademoiselle de Barth is a beautiful woman."

"And so is this Suzanne, I dare say," she suggested, looking at me from under her lashes.

But I was not to be diverted from the torture.

"Suzanne is very well," I said, "but of quite a different type. She is only a girl, you know, a very pretty and jolly one; but Mademoiselle Élise has what they call the grand air. And then, she is such a splendid type, such a match for Frederic. Suzanne is dark, and reminds me of you when I look at her; but Mademoiselle Élise has hair the most golden, eyes the bluest."

I stopped. She was no longer looking at me, but out the window, and I could have sworn that she was smiling.

"'T would not be at all surprising should Fred-

eric lose his heart to her," I concluded, determined to strike home, since she affected to disdain lighter blows. "Indeed, he may have already done so."

She pulled her mouth down with a doleful little grimace, which did not seem quite genuine.

"That would be a pity, wouldn't it?" she asked.

Now how is a man to fathom a woman's heart? Here had I been doing my best to wound her, and she laughing at me! It was Mademoiselle Élise and Frederic over again — here was I disarmed by a minx who wielded a weapon far more subtle than any rapier. So I sat looking at her, not finding a word to say.

"And you have learned to speak their ugly language, I suppose?" she asked.

"'Tis not an ugly language," I said sulkily, "but the sweetest, softest one I ever heard. Yes, I have learned to speak it a little."

"But these others speak English, do they not?"

"Yes; most of them much better than I speak French."

"Then you must promise me something, Stewart," she said, looking at me with her best eyes.

"What is it?" I asked.

"That you will speak only English to them while they are here. I do not understand two words of French, and I can't bear to have people talking before me and I not know what they say. Besides," she added ingenuously, "since they have

come to America, since this is to be their home, the sooner they learn our language the better ; don't you think so ? ”

What a spoiled child it was ! But there was no resisting her — besides, that look was worth it — so I promised.

“ Thank you, sir,” she said, with beaming face. “ Now, if you wish, as a reward you may walk around my garden with me.”

I followed her down the path to the garden, with its high hedge, its tangle of shrubbery, its formal, box-edged beds of flowers. Straight through the centre ran a broad path to a bower at the western side, overhung by clematis and honeysuckle ; behind it rose a gentle terrace, where a vineyard had been planted years before.

“ It makes me think always of Angelo's garden,” she said, “ ‘ whose westward side is with a vineyard backed.’ Only this is circummured with box and not with brick.”

“ Angelo's garden ? ” I repeated at a loss, and paused a moment to look at her — she knew her Poet far better than I, there could be no doubt of that.

“ You see,” she explained with a little laugh, interpreting my look, “ a girl has so little else to do, while a boy ” —

“ May waste his time as shamelessly as he please, and no one blame him.”

“ And then my father loves the dramas so. He is always reading them. He likes me to read them to him.”

“Why seek to find excuses for me, cousin Ruth?” I asked bitterly. “Let us admit at once that I am stupid — that I have suffered my wits to run to weeds.”

We had reached the bower and she sank down upon the seat, looking up at me with a queer little smile.

“I do not think you stupid, Stewart,” she said, “but I find you very puzzling sometimes. To look at you, one would imagine you good-natured, and yet” —

“And yet you have found appearances deceitful? I used to be good-natured, Ruth.”

“Used to be? Then why not now, Stewart?”

“Would you ask Tantalus to be good-natured?” I demanded, with some warmth.

She looked at me covertly, from under her long lashes.

“No, that is n’t true,” I said slowly. “I am not Tantalus; I am only cross and stupid and not brave enough to take my medicine without a grimace.”

Still she sat silent, playing with her bonnet-strings, but I had grip of myself again and so was strong enough to look away from her down the path, at the boscage round the house.

“It is a pretty view, is n’t it,” she said at last, “the vista with the house at the end? My room overlooks the garden — those are my windows you see. But come — this is n’t visiting the flowers — I’m beginning to think we are both stupid. See these cornelian roses — they are just in their glory

now." She led the way from bed to bed, from flower to flower, I following and finding her better worth looking at than any of her blooms. "Don't you love flowers, Stewart?" she asked.

"Not so much as some other things."

"I do," she retorted. "More than anything; because they are always lovely to me — never cross, or tiresome, or puzzling — and they never lecture. I detest a lecturer."

She glanced up at me slyly, but the shot flew wide of the mark, for I was quite sure she was not in earnest.

"And now I must send you about your business, sir," she said, in punishment, perhaps, for my not wincing. "I have a thousand things to do."

I watched her until she had disappeared indoors, and then went slowly back to the library. But I left my book where I had laid it — I could not read; I could only stretch out upon the window-seat and look out across the fields, and think and think on my unhappy fortune.

Just as evening fell, the coach rumbled up to the door, and such a merry crowd as scrambled out of it! There was M. le Comte, and there was his son, and — wonder of wonders! — his daughter. Yes, and there were Dr. Saugrain and black-eyed Suzanne and M. de Malartie! Six of them, and just the six I should have chosen! By what wizardry Colonel Stewart had got them together — how he had brought about such a daring infraction of the convenances — no chaperone, good heavens!

— I never knew; but I have always thought it one of his most remarkable exploits. Perhaps the spirit of the New World was already in their veins. At any rate, he stood there and did the honors quite as simply as though it were the most ordinary thing in the world. I confess to some misgivings when he presented Mistress Ruth to the ladies, rather looking to see her plunge some subtle verbal dagger into their bosoms — which only shows what a fool I was, for she did no such thing, but welcomed them with a warmth so seemingly genuine and unaffected that my opinion of the essential duplicity of woman was more than ever strengthened.

But the event fell out just as I had feared. M. Bourogne at once appropriated Ruth, Frederic turned to Élise, and I was left with Suzanne. Not but that Suzanne could be a charming comrade, but the sight of Bourogne smiling into his partner's face quite spoiled the dinner for me. But the others heeded me not at all and the table rang with mirth. I had never seen Colonel Stewart in such fettle. At his right sat M. le Comte, wondering inwardly, perhaps, at the habits of these strange Americans. At his left was M. le Vicomte de Malartie, one time captain in the Sixteenth Louis's guards, hero of a hundred feats of arms, soldier of fortune in a dozen wars. Across from them smiled the round face of Dr. Saugrain, physician, philosopher, alchemist, and as ready with his wit as Malartie with his sword. We others but sat and listened for the most part; but

my ear was deadened like a funeral drum, for across from me sat that impudent Bourogne, and by his side my cousin, all her hatred of the French palpably forgotten.

"I have heard great tales of your prowess, sir," said the colonel to his neighbor at the left. "When I was a boy, I was rather proud of my own play, till a better man than I taught me a lesson. Then, you see, I lost my sword hand, and that was over. And you, M. le Comte, you have taken part, I dare say, in more than one affair?"

"More than one — yes, monsieur." He smiled reminiscently. "But my hand grows old and my wrist stiff. I have passed the sword on to my son."

"And you, dear doctor," began the colonel.

"I, monsieur," — and the kindly little man laughed, — "I early perceived that my figure was not made for fighting, and so chose a profession accordingly. I hope never to appear upon a field of battle," he added. "I fear I could not even run away."

The wine had gone up and down, for these were seasoned drinkers. A kind of fierce joy was running through my veins.

"I propose a toast," cried Colonel Stewart at last. "May France and America be ever friends and champions of liberty!"

"Amen!" said Malartie, and the toast was drunk.

"And I," said father, "ask you to drink to the success of this enterprise upon which these friends of ours have entered."

“And I,” said M. le Comte, “propose the health and long life of Colonel Stewart and his charming lady ; and may we one day be able to repay their kindness.”

They were coming fast, indeed, but the nimble negroes kept the glasses filled.

“And I,” said M. Bourogne, struggling to his feet, “propose the health of a lady the most charming I have met in the New World — who would be an ornament to any world — Mademoiselle Ruth.”

The scoundrel ! That he should dare to call her so ! Yet I drank the toast, for I fancied he was looking at me, daring me.

It was the doctor’s turn.

“It is far from me,” he said, “to dispute a single word that my young friend has uttered ; yet, in this new world, I find the charms of the maids more than matched by those of their mothers. I propose the health of Madam Stewart and Madam Randolph.”

How they applauded the little doctor, until he grew quite rosy with pleasure ! But who was that speaking ? Not Frederic, surely !

“Among the Greeks,” he was saying, “clear-eyed Diana — that bold and fearless huntress — was placed high among the other goddesses. They pictured her as strong of limb and sure of hand and fleet of foot — perfect in every part. There is one here to-night who might match Diana in any of these things, and I propose her health — Mademoiselle Élise !”

Ah, cousin, I thought, as I drank it down, there is a blow for you! Well, I will add another.

“Greece is a long way off,” I began, gripping the table, which seemed to be swaying strangely, “and Diana lived, oh, many years ago. The Greeks were no doubt right in worshiping her; but I am sure, were they here to-night, they would think of her no longer — they would pour their libations to the lady whose health I drink — Suzanne!”

“Bravo!” cried Malartie, and as I dropped into my seat, I heard them laughing up and down the board. Then the ladies rose to go, and as she passed my chair, Suzanne leaned toward me for the briefest instant.

“You foolish boy!” she whispered.

CHAPTER XV

WESTWARD HO!

"DID I make a very great fool of myself, Frederic?" I asked in the morning, having but an indistinct recollection of the events that had closed the evening's entertainment.

"No more than some others of us," he answered shortly. "For you there was at least the excuse of youth."

I went downstairs, very penitent and shame-faced, and found that our guests were already astir. I saw Bourogne take possession of Ruth, as though quite by right, and walk away with her. Then I caught the flash of Suzanne's eyes, and hastened to her side with an eagerness somewhat simulated.

"You do well to come!" she cried, as I joined her. "I trust you are properly repentant this morning, my friend?"

"Repentant? And for what, Suzanne?"

"For that persiflage of last night. You quite shamed me, sir!"

We had drifted away out of earshot of the others, not heeding the breakfast bell, and a sudden devil of perverseness possessed me.

"I see not why it should shame you, Suzanne," I said.

"Because one likes not being — what do you call it? — made fun of. If you had been in earnest" —

"But I was in earnest, Suzanne!" I protested, looking down at the wave of her hair, the curve of her cheek — after all, there were other girls than Mistress Ruth — just as lovely, and not nearly so intricate.

But Suzanne looked up at me with her great eyes in quite a frightened way.

"Oh, no, no!" she cried. "Do not say that! nothing would displease me more!"

"But why, Suzanne?" I asked, astonished at her vehemence — and somewhat injured in my self-esteem.

She hesitated a moment, and then looked up at me again, quite bravely.

"Because I know it is not true, Monsieur Randolph," she said softly. "I can read your heart. You will forgive me if I have wounded you."

"A thousand times!" I cried, crimson with shame. "It is I who should ask forgiveness."

"You are forgiven, sir," she answered sedately. "Only please do not offend again, and we may still be friends."

"You may trust me," I said contritely. "It seems I can be a fool by day as well as by night."

She glanced up at my shamed, rueful face, and her eyes were dancing.

"Most men can," she said. "Come, we must join the others."

They were already at table, and there was an

instant's significant silence as we entered and took our places. I saw the little doctor frowning thoughtfully down into his plate ; but it was not for some moments that I mustered courage to glance at Ruth. She was deep in talk with Bourogne, whom I began to think insufferable, and seemed not to know that I was present. He remained with her until the moment of departure, which, thank Heaven, was not long delayed ; and it was with a sense of relief which shamed me that I saw the coach roll away down the road. Élise and Suzanne were well enough, the doctor was adorable, but Bourogne — I had never thought that Ruth could be so foolish.

“ Why so pensive ? ” asked a mocking voice above me. “ Is it the black eyes or the blue ? ”

She was leaning over the porch-rail, and I had never seen her so alluring.

“ 'T is neither,” I answered briefly. “ You, at least, seem to have quite recovered.”

“ Recovered ? ”

“ From the pain of parting. But perhaps he has promised to soon return ? ”

“ Perhaps he has,” she retorted, her cheeks flushing. “ In any case, 't is no concern of yours ! ”

I took the blow full in the face.

“ No,” I said ; “ you are right. I shall remember hereafter,” and I stalked away with what dignity I could muster.

The evening passed miserably enough. We were all of us out of sorts — all except our host — the women from the grief of parting, Frederic and

I from another cause. Mistress Ruth was not visible the whole evening. We were to set out on the morrow for Alexandria, and thither Colonel Stewart and father would accompany us to bid us a last Godspeed at the start, which was to be made next day. More than once I saw mother furtively wiping her eyes over the last devoted stitches, and when we rose to say good-night, she caught us convulsively in her arms and kissed us. I awoke late in the night, and for an instant fancied myself a boy again and the British in the house, for she was kneeling by the bed, her face buried in the pillow.

“Dear mother,” I said, and stroked her hair gently.

She got slowly to her feet and leaned over me and pressed her cheek to mine.

“There,” she whispered. “Go to sleep again, dear. I should not have waked you,” and she went softly from the room.

In the morning she was almost cheerful, and was busy with the last packing of our boxes when I came downstairs. Colonel Stewart had stipulated that we should take but two small ones, and at last they were packed and deposited upon the cart, which was started off at once for Alexandria.

Colonel Stewart’s voice was more than usually expressive that morning as he led the service. The lesson, I remember, was from the sixth chapter of Exodus, and we sat very silent, listening as he read :—

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I

am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments :

“ And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God : and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

“ And I will bring you unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob ; and I will give it to you for a heritage : I am the Lord.”

He closed the book and went on with the prayer — I had heard it often before, yet never really until now.

“ O eternal God, we commend to thy almighty protection, these thy servants ; guard them, we beseech thee, from the perils of the wilderness, from sickness, from the violence of enemies, and from every evil to which they may be exposed. Conduct them in safety to the haven where they would be, with a grateful sense of thy mercies, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

So, I doubt not, night and morning, during all the years of our absence, that prayer arose in that devoted house, and who dare say that it remained unanswered ?

Breakfast was soon over, — excitement had robbed both Frederic and me of our appetites, — and the horses were ordered from the stables.

“ And now, my dears,” began the colonel, addressing the assembled company, “ I want to say

again that there is no great hazard in this journey which the boys are starting on. They will write us, of course, whenever chance offers, but they must know that we are not worrying about them. As for you, boys, you are not to incur any danger needlessly, yet never forget that you are men, and so must play a man's part. Here are the horses, so say good-by."

A kiss and close embrace from mother and Mrs. Stewart, and I found Ruth's hand in mine.

"I was wrong yesterday, dear Ruth," I began brokenly.

"No, it was I who was wrong, dear consin," she said very softly, "only I couldn't admit it until you did, sir." And while I was yet striving to unravel this bit of logic, she held up her face to me. "I think I should like you to kiss me also, Stewart."

I bent and touched her lips with mine, then went blindly from the room, not venturing a backward glance, and threw myself into the saddle. They trooped out after us, and we were off.

For the first mile or two I saw nothing of the road, then the fresh air of the morning steadied my pulse and cleared my brain. Youth, the heartless, looks not back but forward, and by the time we cantered into Alexandria the future had quite claimed my thoughts. We stopped that night with Mr. Dodds, and assisted Dr. Saugrain in packing away the last of his priceless instruments. He was in great fear lest they should not make safely the passage of the mountains, but not even this could

disturb the sweetness of his temper, and he and Colonel Stewart, who had found themselves alike in many things, sat far into the night talking of France, of war, of women, and I know not what beside.

All Alexandria turned out next day to see the caravan start on its long journey. No other word describes that aggregation, for it seemed that every horse and wagon in the states must have been mustered to convey the colonists westward.

"Why, 't is a second Braddock's army," laughed Colonel Stewart, as we watched the procession file slowly past, and when M. le Comte rode up to say adieu, he added, "You will have need of diligence, sir, or frost will find you still in the mountains."

"I know it, sir," replied that gentleman, "yet what can be done? The Scioto Company has agreed to furnish transportation free of cost, and in consequence many things were brought from France which might well be left behind."

"Well, in this, at least, the company is getting the worst of the bargain. I have not seen your son," he added. "Is he with the rear?"

"My son left yesterday for New York, sir, to straighten out, if possible, this question of title."

I breathed a little sigh of relief. I was truly glad Bourogne was not to go with us.

"Well, good-by and good fortune, sir," said the colonel, "and my heartiest regard."

"Always shall I remember with gratitude your kindness," answered the Frenchman with emotion, and put spur to his horse.

"I'll wager he'll be on foot before the journey ends," observed the colonel, looking after him. "Horses have a way of going to pieces in the hills, and they seem to have few extra ones."

We had ourselves determined to make the journey on foot, since it would be a ceaseless annoyance to keep the horses back to the pace of the slow-going wagons, which, it was evident, could not make over ten or twelve miles a day, even under the most favorable conditions. Our guns and baggage were safely aboard one of them, so that we need carry nothing save knife and pistol.

The last of the wagons passed us, and M. de Malartie, who was with it, stopped to exchange a word.

"If you could only go with us, sir!" he said.

"Faith, and I'd like to!" cried the colonel with bright eyes. "The fever is in my veins yet, sir; but, of course, that's nonsense. Old dogs must hug the fire. So good-by and bon voyage. Say good-by, boys; 't is time for you to go."

We pressed his hand and father's, and I dare say there were tears in the eyes of both of them as they watched us trudge away down the road. Certainly there were tears in mine so that I could scarcely see them when I looked back for the last time as the road turned among the trees.

CHAPTER XVI

ANOTHER PARTING

WE soon caught up with the wagons, and found that most of the men were walking like ourselves, for the hot sun beating down upon the wagon-tops made the atmosphere within unendurable. They were all cheerful enough, and trudged along talking and laughing, bursting now and then into the chorus of a song, and saluting with loud mirth every traveler they met upon the way. No doubt many strange companies had journeyed over this road into the wilderness, but surely none stranger than this.

We covered about ten miles that day and camped in a very pleasant valley, watered by a branch of the Shenandoah. Fires were soon alight, and while the more important of the colonists had tents pitched for them, the most were contented to sit under heaven's canopy with the bright stars to light them. We — Frederic, Malartie, and I — were bidden to M. le Comte's tent, a large marquee, furnished with surprising luxury and completeness, where we sat down to a meal which would have done no discredit to our cuisine at Riverview, and presently from without there came the sound of music.

“Our orchestra,” explained our host, in answer to our questioning glance, “and a very good one — some of the best musicians in Paris have cast in their lot with us.”

I reflected that they would doubtless regret it soon enough, but held my peace. M. le Comte ordered the flaps of the tent to be lifted, and just outside, in the light of a campfire, we saw the musicians sitting. The men and women of the party gathered about them by twos and threes, but they could not stay long silent. One of them bent for a word into the leader’s ear; he nodded, and in a moment they were off: —

“À cheval, à cheval pour aller ma mie,
Lon, lon, la.
Ma belle n’y était pas; la voila qui arrive,
Lon, lon, la,
Landerira, landerirette, landerirra,
Lon, lon, la.”

How the refrain echoed under the trees! There was a little silence when the song had ended, and finally a tall young fellow was urged forward. The orchestra swept into a quaint little prelude, and then came the song: —

“À la claire fontaine,
Devant le palais du roi,”

— perhaps you know it — sung in a baritone of singular sweetness. They would not be satisfied with one song, and he gave a second and a third. Then the musicians shut up their instruments, but half an hour later a dozen fiddles were playing in the camp.

So the evening passed, and so passed many an-

other. Frederic and I were the guests sometimes of our good doctor, sometimes of Malartie, once or twice of Captain Isaac Guion, to whom the task had been intrusted of getting us all safely over the mountains; occasionally we played the host ourselves. We came to know many others of the colonists, rich and poor, leaders and rank and file, and we found them all worth liking. One thing only vexed me, — day after day passed, and I caught but the most fleeting glimpses of Suzanne. Did I stop to pass the evening with her father, she had some business which called her to another part of the camp; did I offer to accompany her, she simulated horror and declared it would be most indiscreet; did I meet her by chance, she immediately had an errand with a friend near by — all of which, I need hardly say, irked me greatly.

Hardship was soon upon us, for as we toiled farther into the mountains the food grew scarce and very bad. Salt beef, day after day, palls upon the roughest appetite; how, then, must it have been with these dainty ones, fostered amid the luxuries of Parisian kitchens? Yet it must be said in justice that even this privation could not wholly damp their spirits; though men grew gaunt and women pale, they could still jest and sing and love!

One day was much like another. We passed Winchester, beyond which the road grew so rough and steep that squads of men were told off to help the wagons, and even then we were ten days in getting forward the thirty miles to Crock's tav-

ern. Twenty miles farther was Frankford town, and in two days more we had covered the twelve miles to Clark's store, perched high up in the hills. From there we descended into the Little Shades of Death, a valley of very pretty oak land, followed by a tract of the tallest pines I ever saw. A fine plantation, known as Tumblestone's, lay just beyond, containing, I should think, at least five thousand acres of beautiful meadow land. A fortnight later, we came to the passage of the Yoh, which was a fairly good ford; but the road beyond was wet and swampy, and we got ahead with great difficulty. It was here that Colonel Stewart's prediction came true, and M. le Comte, last of the score and more who had started horseback, gave up his mount to the transport, which could have used a dozen more, so spent were all the horses with the heavy roads and lack of good forage. Next day we crossed a little brook, near which, it is said, General Braddock lies buried, and at last we came to the great ridge called Laurel Hill. The road was very steep, and the horses had to be doubled on the wagons to get them over, a long and weary task, while more than one got beyond control and dashed to pieces on the steep descent.

We three had gathered in a little group near the mountain-crest, to take breath from the toil of getting our wagon up, when Captain Guion passed us, weighted with the cares of his position. But he still had time to give us a nod and word of greeting.

"You can get a fine view of the westward coun-

try from that rock yonder," he said, pointing to a crag which jutted from the hillside. "It will be some hours before we can get the other wagons over, so you will have ample time to clamber up to it."

"Let us go," said Malartie. "I am anxious to see this new El Dorado."

We fought our way upward after him, through the thick underbrush of berry vines and creepers, until at last we came to the great ledge of rock which towered over the valley. How my heart leaped as I looked down upon that smiling scene! A dozen broad plantations lay beneath us; six or seven miles away appeared the little cluster of houses that made the town of Beason; Redstone, the merest ribbon of silver, now reflecting the sun's rays in a thousand rippling mirrors, now diving out of sight beneath the trees, ran westward from us, pointing the way to the Mecca at its mouth, where our weary land-journey was to end.

"A beautiful country," said Frederic at last, with a little sigh. "A beautiful country. And the Ohio country is even more beautiful, 't is said. We shall have small trouble in making a home there, Stewart."

"I trust so," I answered, yet home is where the heart is, and mine, whatever I might wish regarding it, was certainly not westward in the wilderness.

"Four thousand acres will make a pretty estate," he added, "and then, perhaps, the black-eyed

daughters of some mighty chieftain will leave their father's wigwam for us and so make us heirs to a vast domain. I am dreaming rosy dreams, Stewart," and he looked at me with a little mocking smile.

"I should not call them such," I retorted somewhat testily, as Malartie burst into a shout of laughter, for though I knew full well he spoke in jest, it seemed to me too bitter, — especially the reference to black eyes.

He did not answer me, but the curve of his lips deepened as he glanced at me again. Below us, around a sharp bend in the road, the last of the wagons creaked into view.

"Come, we must go down," said Malartie. "We have idled long enough. There is work for us."

I paused for another long look across the valley, and then followed him downward through the trees.

The country from the ridge to Redstone Old Fort was very broken, though few of the hills were so steep but they could be made without doubling. So at last we pulled into the squalid little settlement, looking down from its high ledge upon the Monongahela. We had been near three months upon the road, and had left a dozen graves to mark it.

Here there was another long delay, for the flat-boats which were being built to carry us down the river were not yet completed. Two weeks dragged

past, — as weary ones as I have ever spent, — and finally the last pin was driven, the last box got aboard. M. le Comte had insisted that this last stage of the journey be made in his boat, and we found Malartie there, as well as Dr. Saugrain and his family. The good doctor was quite jubilant, for his precious instruments had come safely through the trying journey. Only once had the wagon broken in which his boxes were, and he had assured himself that not a tube was fractured, not a bottle cracked.

“Now we have only to drift down this placid stream,” he said. “Seven days, or eight, perhaps, and we shall land. Then will come that great and noble work of building up a home in the forest, where it will be my privilege to observe the children of the wilderness, innocent, gentle” —

“Innocent!” cried Frederic. “Gentle!”

“Certainly,” said the doctor, looking at him over his spectacles. “Or with such vices only as they have learned from the white man.”

“Do not trust too much to their innocence, sir,” said Frederic. “They are said to be very treacherous and cruel.”

“I cannot believe it,” protested the little Frenchman. “I have no wish to injure them, so why should they injure me?”

It was small use to dispute with him, for he spoke from the heights of a philosophy that defied experience. Could he have foreseen the future, he might not have watched so placidly those final preparations for departure. At last the word was

spoken, and we drifted out into the current of the stream.

Frederic and Mademoiselle de Barth were leaning together against the rail, deep in talk, and I made my way among the bundles and boxes to the bow. There — wonder of wonders! — I found Suzanne. She looked around with a little start when she heard my step behind her.

“So it is you!” she said.

“Yes, I. And I am glad to have found you. You seem to have quite forgot that I am with this expedition.”

She looked away from me with a little grimace, but I could yet see the curve of her cheek, the fullness of her firm white throat, and found them worth contemplating.

“You have avoided me,” I continued grimly. “I have not seen you a dozen times since we left Alexandria — I have been alone with you not once.”

She looked up at me, smiling.

“Well, monsieur?”

“It is not well. It is not using me kindly.”

“No; only justly.”

It was a good retort and I winced under it.

“But women should show mercy,” I protested.

“A woman’s first law is self-protection.”

She was looking away at the bank again, and I could not see her face.

“Will you explain, mademoiselle?” I asked after a moment, scenting danger ahead, but powerless to resist its fascination.

She turned back to me again, and this time her face was very grave.

"Monsieur Randolph," she began, "I cannot forget that tone you adopted with me the day I was your guest — but for your youth, I could not have pardoned you. I have forgiven, but, I repeat, I cannot forget. There — do not be angry — you are still very young, monsieur — not younger in years than I, perhaps; but a girl, and especially one of Paris, is older than her years. I know you have a good heart, but it is not yet a true heart, which I am sure it will one day become. Besides, my friend, in a day or two we part — you will go your way and I mine. I shall always remember you — I shall always remember your kindness and I shall, in time, forget — other things."

The minutes passed, and I could find no word of answer. Even then, I could not wholly deny the justice of her words — I know now, looking back, how truly she had read me.

At last she looked up at me out of the corner of her eye, and was conscience-stricken, perhaps, at my evident distress.

"I regret only one thing," she said softly, "that I shall not know you when you become a man. Now I must say good-by."

She held out her hand, and I, in all humility, raised it to my lips. She let it lie in mine a moment, then turned away and went slowly back to her father. I had no heart to follow — I wished only to be alone with my thoughts — and

sorry ones they were. The bottoms slipped backward past us and gave place to higher land, but it was not till Frederic touched me on the arm that I noticed it.

"Why, boy," he said, "I thought you must have fallen overboard. You have been in this corner an hour — two hours — how long?"

"I don't know," I answered. "Long enough, at least, to have grown some years older."

He looked at me for a moment without speaking.

"Well," he said at last, "'t is time to sup. And I am very hungry."

I went back with him and ate, and after the meal we sat down together to watch the river. Our course was almost due westward, with the river some two hundred yards in width. On and on we went; evening fell, and still we sat watching the reflection of the stars upon the water, and listening for the faint ripple which told that an island was ahead. There seemed a great many of them, but the men at the sweeps knew the river thoroughly and it had been decided that we should run all night.

Morning found us thirty miles farther on our way, and we had just risen, when we floated out into what seemed a great lake.

"'T is the forks!" cried Frederic. "See, there is the fort."

There on the point between the forks it was, standing high above the river, and we stood watching it until we swept out into the broad Ohio and left it far behind. The river grew ever more beauti-

ful, hurrying along between two high and undulating ridges, opening before noon into broad bottoms. So the day passed and evening came again, without Suzanne appearing for an instant. I made bold to ask her father where she was, and he answered that she had a slight fever and was lying down. He added that he feared the fever would be very bad in the bottoms along the river, especially when they were turned up with the plough, and trusted that the French town had been laid out on a plateau high above it. I was in no mood to talk and soon sought my blankets. The third day passed as the second had — and the fourth and fifth — only when I asked after Suzanne early each morning and again at night, I was told she was no better — slightly worse, if anything. Still, her father said, there was no danger; the fever was slight, but very weakening, and would take some days to break.

The sixth morning dawned clear and fair, and breakfast was scarcely over when word was brought us that the mouth of the Muskingum was close at hand. Just ahead there lay two islands in the river, with the three channels in plain view; then a single long one, which the captain said was called Duvall's. We kept to the north of it and very near the shore.

"There's the fort!" cried the captain, as we swung out again into mid-channel, and far ahead we could see the walls of a blockhouse on the point of land where the Muskingum flowed into the Ohio. Nearer, but not so distinct because farther

from the bank, we could discern a second stockade and a few scattered houses.

“That is Marietta,” said the captain, “named after the French queen, you know,” and he ran up a flag to the top of a pole at the bow to show that he had passengers to be taken off. Almost at once, a small boat, rowed by two men, put out from shore.

“Any baggage besides these two boxes?” asked the captain.

“That is all, sir,” said Frederic.

“All right ; they ’ll be alongside in five minutes. Mind you ’re ready, for they don’t like rowing back against the stream.”

Our good-bys were soon said — M. le Comte, the brave Malartie, the good doctor and his wife, — Mademoiselle Élise — all the kind people whom we had come to know so well — all but one.

“May we not say adieu to your daughter, sir?” I asked the doctor, but he shook his head.

“She would not know you,” he said. “She does not know even me.”

I turned away to watch the boat, not daring to question him further. It was alongside in a moment, and our boxes were lifted into her. A last hand-clasp, and we, too, were over the rail.

“Cast off!” cried the captain ; our men backed on their oars, and the great boat surged ahead.

We stood up and waved to them, the dear people, and they waved back and shouted last tender words. Then, suddenly, there was a little commotion among them, and I saw Suzanne press forward

to the rail. Far over the side she leaned and kissed her hands to us — to me!

“It is she!” I cried. “I must go back! Release me, Frederic!”

“Steady, boy!” he said, and held me tight. “You cannot go back. It is too late.”

Too late! The boat swept on, the figures at the rail blurred and faded.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PEACE PIPE GOES OUT

WE had our boxes taken to the inn at the point, a two-storied frame building kept by a man named Levi Munsel, and betook ourselves after them to give some needed attention to our toilets before presenting ourselves before the governor. But we were destined to be disappointed at the outset, for after much questioning as to our business and destination, Munsel informed us that General St. Clair was at Fort Washington, four or five hundred miles down the river, overseeing the preparations for an advance against the Miami Indians.

“Against the Indians,” I repeated in surprise. “But I thought we had a treaty with the Indians!”

“So we have,” said Munsel, with a burr to his voice that brought back to me a very unpleasant memory. “We’ve got a dozen of ’em, I reckon. But th’ Injuns don’t keer nothin’ fer that, s’ long ’s th’ British ’ll give ’em a gun an’ powder an’ ball—yes, an’ a bounty fer scalps. You can’t trust no Injun, sir, till you git a bullet through him—an’ he ’ll fool you then, sometimes; it’s jest his natur’.”

“But when will General St. Clair be back?” we asked.

“Th’ Lord knows,” said Munsel, with calm philosophy. “Not fer a month, anyway. This is th’ sixteenth of October — say th’ last o’ November. I kin make y’ comf’table till then, gentlemen.”

But such a delay was far from falling in with our plans, and we held a hasty consultation.

“Who represents the governor here during his absence?” I asked at last.

“Why, his son, Arthur, I reckon,” said Munsel reluctantly.

“And where can we find him?”

“Up at Campus Martius, most likely.”

“Where?” I queried, surprised at this warlike name.

“At Campus Martius — you must ‘a’ seen it when you landed — that stockade about half a mile up th’ neck. Th’ governor’s fam’ly lives in th’ southwest blockhouse.”

We concluded that our wisest course would be to hunt up the governor’s son without delay, so we started out for the fortification with the resounding name. We had first to cross a wide and very substantial bridge over a creek called the Tiber, — one looked about instinctively for the seven hills, — and were soon quite close to the stockade. It was an imposing structure, built upon the margin of a high plateau, some four hundred feet distant from the Muskingum, and was in the shape of a square of about two hundred feet to a side, with a blockhouse at each corner. The

blockhouses were two-storied, with the upper story projecting, and between them the curtains consisted of rows of dwellings, also two-storied, and with high roofs, the whole forming a very strong and impressive fortress. Small cannon frowned from the bastions at the corners, and it was difficult to see how it could ever be in danger from the savages.

There was a strong gate in the lower story of the central house, and through this we passed to the interior court, which presented a busy scene. A well was digging in the centre, and a score of men were putting the finishing touches to the dwellings along the walls. Great piles of four-inch planks lay about, proving that the fortress had been built of no flimsy stuff.

We asked the first man we met the way to the governor's dwelling, and he directed us to the blockhouse in the farther corner. As we approached it, a slender girl of about fifteen, who had been sitting before the door, rose to receive us.

"We are looking for General St. Clair's son," began Frederic. "Can you tell us where he is?"

"Arthur went over to Fort Harmar this morning, sir," she answered. "We are expecting him back at any moment. You would best sit down and wait for him."

"Thank you. We come from Virginia, where we once had the pleasure of meeting General St. Clair. Am I right in thinking you his daughter?"

"Yes, sir," and she smiled up at him, looking, I thought, very frail and delicate. "Jane is my

name; and there is Louisa," she added suddenly, looking past us.

We turned to see as pretty a specimen of horsemanship as one would care to look upon. A girl, splendidly mounted, had just dashed through the gateway at a speed that challenged disaster, but she guided her horse adroitly hither and thither, leaped him over a pile of boards, and finally whirled to a stop before us. Frederic sprang to help her from the saddle, but she was down before he could reach her side.

"Good boy," she said, taking her horse's satin muzzle in her hands, to hold it an instant against her cheek. "Good boy — now off with you."

She released him, and, with a little whinny, he turned and trotted slowly out through the gateway to his stable.

"Louisa," began her sister, her cheeks glowing with admiration of the other's daring, "these are two gentlemen from Virginia who have come to see Arthur."

She looked us over with a single glance of her bright eyes, but I found her worthy a much more extended scrutiny. She seemed the very incarnation of life and health and spirits — glowing, warm, buoyant — as she stood there erect, tapping her skirt with her riding whip.

"A Diana!" thought I. "Here is a Diana to put Élise to shame!"

"Your sister has assured us that he will soon return," said Frederic, "and has suggested that we await him here."

"Quite right," assented Diana. "You will excuse me, gentlemen," she added, and swept into the house.

There was a little silence after she had gone. My eyes were still filled with the vision, and so, I dare say, were Frederic's.

"Louisa is always coming in that way," ventured little Jane at last, striving to excuse her idol, yet daring us to do anything but worship.

"And a very beautiful way it is," said I, from a full heart.

"Do you think so?" she asked eagerly. "Oh, so do I! She loves the life of the woods so much; she is always riding through them, going for miles, sometimes."

"And you with her, perhaps," smiled Frederic.

"I? Oh, no. I would never dare. You see, I am a stay-at-home. But here is Arthur."

He was a young man, just turned twenty, not so tall as his father, but with all his grace of manner. Frederic gave him Colonel Stewart's letter, and he ran his eyes rapidly over it.

"I am glad indeed to see you, gentlemen," he said, when he had finished, shaking hands with us a second time. "I have heard my father speak often of Colonel Stewart, and I know he will deeply regret not being here to welcome you. But you must stay with us to dinner; afterward we can talk over your affairs."

We were presented in form to little Jane and Diana, who unbent somewhat when this had been accomplished, and even deigned to use her fine

eyes occasionally upon Frederic. We sat down with them to table, where we told them something of ourselves, of our trip over the mountains, and of our friends, the French.

"I fear they will soon find themselves in great need of help and counsel," I added.

"I am sure my father will do everything in his power for them," said our host. "General Putnam, on behalf of the Scioto Company, has been busy for some months preparing their houses opposite the Kanawha, so in that, at least, they will not be disappointed. He himself is in the east, but John Matthews, his agent, is on the ground to receive them. Now about your mission west."

We had two claims, we explained, to place somewhere along the Scioto.

"There is no hope of doing that at once," he said. "General Harmar is, at the present moment, leading an expedition against the Miami towns, which, if successful, may open these lands to you. You would best wait here until the expedition ends. Then it will be easier to make plans."

"But in the meantime," I began.

"In the meantime, you will be my guests," said St. Clair quickly. "I have already sent to Munsel for your luggage."

"But, my dear sir," protested Frederic, "we cannot think of imposing upon you so, or of spending so long a time in idleness, where there is so much to do. You must give us work."

"Nothing easier," laughed our host. "Work you shall, and be my guests you shall. Father

would never pardon me if I permitted you to go elsewhere."

There was no gainsaying him, but we determined, at least, to be no burden upon the little colony, and that very afternoon joined a gang of men who had started a trench for a palisade about the fort. Luckily, such work required no previous training, so that we could labor to as good purpose as any man. That evening, a number of the leading men of the colony called to see us, among them Mr. Winthrop Sargent, who brought his bride with him, — theirs had been the first wedding in the Northwest Territory, — and in the month that followed, we grew to know them all very well. And if we found them not quite so lovable as the French, they were none the less a fearless, determined, self-reliant people.

We came to know Miss St. Clair better, too, and found that she appealed more to the head than to the heart. Her superb horsemanship was not her only attainment, for she was perfect mistress of the rifle, using it with an accuracy quite astonishing. Nor was she less versed in those things which are usually a woman's accomplishments, for she had been carefully educated at Philadelphia. But with it all, there was something lacking, — some charm of womanliness, — and I was never much astonished that in the end her fate should be so commonplace and sordid.

We were working away one day, when who should appear but M. le Comte de Barth and M. le Marquis Marnesia, together with some half dozen others of the French.

"You will come with us, will you not, *messieurs*?" cried M. le Comte. "We desire that you should witness our protest against the perfidy of this Scioto Company."

"We will go with you, certainly," answered Frederic, and together we sought out Arthur St. Clair.

"We have come to demand audience of the General Putnam," began M. le Comte, who was plainly laboring under great excitement.

"He is not here at present, sir," said Arthur.

"We have been cheated in the location of our lands," went on the Frenchman, his anger increasing from moment to moment. "The lands bought by Marnesia and me were to be located at the mouth of the Scioto. Besides, how could you suppose that men of our rank would consent to live in a little, squalid cabin of logs?"

"My dear sir," interrupted Arthur, flushing at the other's vehemence, "I suppose nothing whatever about it, because I know nothing about it. I am not connected with the Scioto Company in any way, nor is my father. You must await General Putnam's return. If you wish, I can assign you to quarters at Fort Harmar, where, I dare say, Captain Fraser will be glad to make room for you."

To this the Frenchmen agreed, and Mademoiselle Élise, somewhat disgusted with her experience of America, promptly joined her father there, and became the belle of the post, as Miss St. Clair was of the settlement. The fort was almost empty, as all the troops, except a small garrison, were

with General Harmar, so the Frenchmen had for themselves and their people all the room they could possibly need. Frederic and I visited them twice or thrice, but M. le Comte's temper had changed sadly for the worse, and he could talk of nothing save his ill-usage. His daughter stood the test much better, but even she had her bad moments. I had thought that she and Diana would be great friends, but some secret cause of dislike sprang up between them and they got along together but indifferently well.

General Putnam returned from the east early in November, and at once set to work to right the injustice done the French, so far as lay within his power. He started out a surveying party to the mouth of the Scioto to locate the desired land, but before they could commence the work, the Indians were in arms again, and the party was driven back to the fort. There seemed no early promise of peace; Marnesia returned to France, and M. le Comte and his daughter crossed the mountains again to Philadelphia, to lay their complaints before the Congress.

General St. Clair came back some three weeks later and seconded the welcome his son had given us. I found him greatly changed, for his hair was quite white and his face seamed and careworn. It was from him we learned of the virtual failure of General Harmar's expedition, for while it had succeeded in destroying five or six Indian towns and had killed some two hundred of the savages, it had itself suffered almost as severely, through

the cowardly behavior of the militia, who had run away at every meeting with the Indians and left the regulars to be cut to pieces.

"I am asked to accomplish miracles," he said wearily, one evening. "The government insists that I secure from the Indians all the land from here west to the Mississippi, but there is only one way to get it, and that is by force. It will take a great army, and this the government will not give me. I asked that a fort be built by Harmar on the Miami, that we might hold what he had gained; but General Knox replied that such a project entailed too great expense. Well, it will entail a greater one ere we win through to that place a second time."

For the savages had broken loose again, boasting that before the budding of the trees they would quench in blood the fire in every cabin north of the Ohio; and for a time it seemed they would make 'good the boast. On the second day of the new year, they burst down upon the Ohio Company's blockhouse at Big Bottom, but thirty miles above the fort, and wiped out the settlement there utterly. Measures were instantly taken for the protection of the colony, and General St. Clair having started for Philadelphia to urge the needs of the west upon the Congress, General Putnam took charge of the defense. The outer settlements were at once abandoned, new blockhouses were ordered built, and a force of the militia under Colonel Sproat was detailed to garrison them; six backwoodsmen were employed as scouts, to watch for

the approach of the enemy and so prevent surprise; outer protections of palisades and abattis were ordered for Campus Martius, and a system of defense arranged in case the savages should appear.

Meanwhile, up and down the river, they were reaping rich harvest of scalps and booty. Boats were decoyed ashore and their occupants murdered; stragglers from the settlements were cut off; traders tortured and their goods portioned among the captors; one of our own scouts, Captain Rogers, who had made a great name in Indian warfare, was ambushed and killed within a mile of the fort; everywhere the savages glutted themselves with murder. The garrison at Campus Martius, which Frederic and I had joined at once, was kept under strict discipline. The men were divided into squads, and at night four of these squads occupied the bastions, while the watchword was cried half-hourly. Magazines were established, bullets cast, the roofs coated with clay so that they could not be fired with blazing arrows. In a word, everything was done that could add in any way to our safety.

I pass hastily over those months of panic, or memory would make me garrulous. And so I come to that evening in late March, when a keel-boat from Fort Pitt tied up at the wharf opposite the fort and General St. Clair landed from it, fresh from his trip across the mountains. We were there to greet him, and he motioned us to follow him to the northwest blockhouse, to the hall used for divine service and all public meetings. The news

that he had come spread quickly through the fort, and the room was crowded when we entered it. He took his stand before us and drew a paper from his pocket.

“My friends,” he began, “I bring good news. The Congress has determined to smite the savages once for all. The regular force will be increased to three thousand men; and militia will be also raised to garrison the posts, so that three thousand effectives may take the field against the Indians this coming summer. The president has honored me with the appointment of commander-in-chief, and with God’s help, I intend to rid our frontier forever of the savages.”

What a cheer went up! — my eyes grew wet as I looked at him standing there so gallant and confident, despite his gray hair and the weight of years. The news spread from house to house, until the whole garrison had gathered in the court to join in the rejoicing. Three thousand seasoned men, a quick and decisive campaign — what doubt could there be of the issue?

“I am going with the general, Stewart,” said Frederic quietly, but with gleaming eyes, when we had sought our room. “I shall offer him my services to-morrow. I cannot stay idle while there is this work to do.”

“Nor I,” I said, and fell asleep to dream of march and ambuscade, of attack and shock of battle, — and of victory, always of victory!

CHAPTER XVIII

DISILLUSION

THE general received our offer with a disconcerting lack of warmth.

“I should be glad to have you, boys,” he said, “but I am placed in an embarrassing position. My friend Stewart has confided you to my care, and what will he think of me if I take you into a hazardous campaign against the Indians?”

Frederic’s face grew red.

“We are not children, sir!” he protested.

“Besides,” I added, “with such a force as we shall muster there can be no great hazard.”

The general’s eyes were twinkling as he looked at us.

“There is always hazard in an Indian campaign,” he said. “But let us compromise. ’T will be four months before we take the field. You shall serve on my staff until then, and meanwhile secure permission to make the campaign;” so for want of better terms we were forced to accede to these.

The general spent some days setting in order the business of the territory; then we accompanied him back to Fort Pitt, — a dreary, wearisome trip it was, — and thence dispatched an urgent letter

to Colonel Stewart, setting the case before him plainly and begging his intercession in our behalf. We pointed out to him how we could not hope to place our claims while the Scioto country was in possession of the Indians; that there could be no great danger in accompanying so large an expedition; and that in this way we should be employed and at no expense while remaining in the west.

“I am sure he will consent,” said Frederic, when we had given this epistle to the general, to be sent forward with a packet of his own; and I heartily echoed the sentiment, which was really more of a hope than an opinion.

There was work enough to be done, as we soon found, and the general, himself toiling from dawn till far into the night, permitted none about him to be idle. A message was sent to the Cornplanter asking the aid of his people; arrangements were made for transporting the troops down the river to Fort Washington when they should arrive; steps were taken to establish a commissariat—in a word, the thousand and one details which must be perfected before a great force may dare to march into the wilderness. The general did the work before him, not doubting that the government was likewise busy, and before the end of the month we started down the river to headquarters. At Marietta, Colonel Sargent came aboard,—he had been appointed adjutant-general of the army, and was also to serve on the general’s staff,—and some hundred miles farther down the river we sighted a peculiar-looking settlement, consisting of about a

hundred cabins built together in long rows parallel to the stream.

"It is Gallipolis," said some one, and we gazed with interest at this place where so many of our friends were living. We were almost opposite it, when a small boat put out from shore and rowed rapidly toward us. As it approached, Frederic sprang suddenly up with a shout of joy.

"'Tis Malartie!" he cried, and sure enough it was that gallant gentleman.

"Is General St. Clair with you?" he shouted.

"Yes."

"Then throw my luggage aboard," he commanded his boatman, and in a moment was over the side, shaking us warmly by the hand, while his boat fell away astern.

"What a pleasure!" he was saying. "My dear friends! And how has fortune used you?"

"Why, very well. And you?"

"Pouf!" He shrugged his shoulders. "I was growing rusty here in the woods. My sword reproached me from the wall. 'What, is it true, then, you can find no further use for me?' And so I took it down, polished it point to hilt, and here I am. Did you not say your general was here? Well, I go to him. Perhaps you will aid me with a word?"

Would we? Radiant with joy, we led him to the general and presented him. Nor was that worthy man less pleased than ourselves.

"You honor me, sir," he said warmly. "I shall count it fortunate to have a man of your experi-

ence with me. Will you accept a position on my staff?"

"'Tis you who honor me, sir!" protested the Frenchman. "I shall be most happy to accept such a position, and trust that I may fill it to your satisfaction."

"I foresee you will do that, sir," responded the general, and so it was settled.

We took him aside at the first moment that we might ask about our friends.

"And how is Doctor Saugrain?"

"Just as he always was — the same kindly old fellow — astonishing every one with his experiments — not so gay, perhaps" —

"Not so gay?"

"No — he has never quite recovered from his daughter's death."

"His daughter's death? — Suzanne?"

"Suzanne — yes. Did you not know? She made a brave fight for months, but the fever never left her. It has killed many others."

I stood staring out over the water, hearing nothing of their talk, thinking only of Suzanne — Suzanne who had seen into my heart so clearly — Suzanne of the black eyes and merry laugh — and I lived through some bitter moments.

"I know not what they will do," Malartie was saying. "They have no money left — not even enough to take them back over the mountains, much less to France, where they are dying to return, even though she is torn with revolution."

He told us something of their story — their first

task had been to clear their land, and they labored for months at felling the huge sycamores, doing it so awkwardly that often they were caught and injured by the falling tree. The great green trunks could not be burned, so deep trenches were dug to receive them. The food ran low — so low that for a time a famine threatened, and families gently bred had lived for weeks on dry beans boiled in water, without grease or salt. A pond back of the settlement had proved a great breeder of disease, and few of the colonists escaped the fever. So matters went from bad to worse, and even the band of musicians and the semi-weekly assemblies in the ballroom, which the Scioto Company had thoughtfully provided, could not keep up their spirits. Such as were able had worked their way back eastward; others had started westward to join the remnants of the old French settlements there, perhaps to go on to St. Louis or New Orleans; the remainder eked out a scanty livelihood and waited only for a chance to get away. It was a sad story, and parts of it we repeated to the general.

“But I can do nothing,” he said, much moved. “Had there been fraud, I would have dealt with the offenders long since; but there has been none, at least on this side the water. The company was victimized by a rascally agent at Paris, and suffered as much as did the French. I have called the attention of the Congress to the matter — more I cannot do.”

We reached Lexington early in May, where General Scott was mustering a force to march at

once against the Wabash towns. He was instructed to hold his forces until one more effort could be made for peace, and then the general and his suite proceeded to Fort Washington.

The garrison consisted of only sixty-two men fit for duty, and our first task was to get together the other portions of the regiment which were in garrison at the other posts. This was done, and by the middle of July some three hundred rank and file, composing the First Regiment of United States troops, had been concentrated at headquarters.

Meanwhile, the campaign started with great success. Overtures of peace were contemptuously rejected by the Indians, and General Scott advanced at once against the Wabash towns, completely destroying four of the most important ones, killing thirty warriors and taking many prisoners, with a loss of only one man. Such a brilliant success persuaded the general to authorize a second expedition of like nature, this time under Colonel Wilkinson, who rendezvoused with about five hundred volunteers at headquarters, and clanked away northward into the forest on the first of August. Three weeks later they were back again, having matched the success of the first foray.

But with us at Fort Washington matters were bad enough. It was soon evident that the three thousand troops promised by the secretary of war would not be forthcoming. Few were willing to enter upon a service so hazardous, so trying, and so ill-paid; and those who did enlist were the

offscourings of prison and gutter, of slum and brothel, who took the musket to escape starvation. Such sorry-looking things they were — white-faced, hollow-chested, flabby-muscled — that Marlartie declared in disgust that one able-bodied Indian would rout the whole force. Yet he did yeoman service, drilling them up and down the camp, trying to teach them to stand erect, to throw back their shoulders, to look him in the eye. Poor fellows! It had been many a long day since most of them had dared look any man in the eye, and the courage to do so was quite gone from them.

Nor was this all. The commissariat had been intrusted to a man by the name of Hodgdon, but the whole of August passed and he had not arrived at the post, nor given any sign of his existence. His work fell on the general, who, besides, was forced to do the work of a dozen other recreants. It was he who must see that food was provided, that horses were secured for transport; who must superintend the repair of every musket and cartridge-box; who must watch the fixing of the ammunition, the making of boxes and slings for the balls and shells, carriages for the cannon, even ropes for lashings. I had respected him before, but as the days passed, and I saw almost every hour some new proof of his exhaustless energy, his fertility of resource, his indomitable purpose, respect gave place to something broader and deeper — I had almost called it worship. Yet no genius could make honest men out of thieves, or trained

soldiers out of flabby skulkers ; he could not undo the chicanery of the rogues who sent him damaged cannon-powder for his muskets, and old gunlocks in boxes labeled flints. He could not render waterproof the tents of flimsy crocus, nor remedy the badness of the axes, which crumpled up like dumplings at the first blow ; he could not make elephantine pack-saddles fit his ponies, nor compel the rotten clothing given the levies to hold together under stress of wear and weather. Do you think this overdrawn ? Not a word of it — indeed, it falls far short of the whole truth. It is no wish of mine to speak harshly of any man, but when I think of those delays and thieveries, those rogueries and thousand annoyances to which our commander was subjected, I grow hot with anger, even yet.

Another evil had to be combated, for the recruits — most of them — possessed a burning thirst for spirits, which they would satisfy at any cost ; and finally the general ordered the whole force, some two thousand in number, to Ludlow's station, five miles from the fort, where we went into camp, and where it was possible to maintain some semblance of discipline.

“ Another man would have retired in disgust,” declared Malartie, but the general had no thought of that. He summoned us to his quarters one night, where we found him propped up in bed, evidently suffering great pain, but cheerful as ever.

“ A legacy from some self-indulgent ancestor of mine,” he said with a smile, nodding at his left

arm, which was encased in a great bandage. "I call it unjust that I should have to pay the penalty because some fellow fifty years ago was too fond of good living. This, I take it, is what the Bible means when it speaks about the sins of the fathers."

"'T is not the first time you have suffered for another's faults, sir," said Frederic.

The general's face lost something of its brightness, and I could see how it had aged.

"No," he said slowly, "perhaps not. Yet, whenever I feel particularly ill-used, I think of another who suffered far more than I have ever done, and who said never a word of complaint, but served his country faithfully. I need not name him," he added. "I had the honor, once, to propose a toast to him at your father's table."

He paused a moment, but perhaps it was only my fancy that his eyes were wet.

"I summoned you here to talk of other things," he said, in a different tone. "You have both been very useful to me, and I should like to keep you with me — but you remember our agreement?"

My heart fell within me, for I had hoped he had forgotten it.

"We remember it, sir," said Frederic.

"And you have heard nothing as yet from your family?"

"Nothing, sir; but I am sure we shall hear."

"If you do not," said the general, "I shall be compelled to leave you at the fort, where there will be work enough to do, and just as needful work as

any you could find with me. I wished to assure you how regretfully I shall do this, but I can see no other course."

"You are quite right, sir," said Frederic, and I wondered that he should take it so quietly. As for me, I was cold with disappointment. I know not what folly I might have uttered, but the general dismissed us while I stood there speechless, and Frederic seized me by the arm and marched me away.

"But it is an outrage!" I cried. "You yourself have said that we are no longer children!"

"Nor are we," he answered. "But we are soldiers, and will do without questioning whatever our general commands."

"Of course," I assented, coming somewhat to my senses, "but he would take us with him — he himself said so — if it were not for this absurd idea."

"And he *will* take us with him; I am sure of it," said Frederic with conviction.

Yet it seemed that the prophecy was not to be fulfilled. General Butler and the last of the recruits arrived from Fort Pitt, supplies were hurried forward, and at last everything was ready for the advance. To be sure, in place of the three thousand effectives promised by General Knox, the force numbered only two thirds as many, and fully half that number were as far from being soldiers as anything could be that walks upon two legs. But winter was at hand, and there could be no more delay. So the order came to march, and

with it another order detailing Ensigns Rohlman and Randolph to Fort Washington, in charge of the transport there.

That September morning was a bitter one to both of us. We watched the troops file slowly northward into the forest, and then turned our faces southward to report at our post of duty, — honorable enough, no doubt; but oh! how commonplace!

CHAPTER XIX

A LABOR FOR HERCULES

WE found enough to occupy us at the fort. The drivers were insolent and careless, the laborers lazy and incompetent, the supply of horses wholly insufficient, and I dare say that in the two weeks that followed, we labored to more purpose than we should have done on any field of battle. But it was so far from my ideal of war — all these worries, quarrels, and disappointments seemed to me so trivial — that I found no savor in the work. Neither did Frederic, perhaps, yet he toiled as though his whole heart were in it, and one of my dearest possessions is a slip of paper upon which the general sent us a few warm words of praise. It was not I who deserved them, of course; but I think that after I had read them, I tried to be more worthy and less selfish.

Then the great day came. A barge had arrived from Fort Pitt with supplies and a few levies, and as Frederic was sorting the expresses, he came suddenly upon a packet which he caught up with a shout of joy.

“It has come, Stewart!” he cried, and tore it open, as I hastened to him.

There were three letters in the packet, and I

need not set down their wealth of tenderness and love. Colonel Stewart's gave the gist of both the others: he believed it the duty of every man upon the frontier, who had no family to leave in danger, to take part in this campaign, that the borders might be rid at once and forever of the scourge of Indian warfare; he repeated his previous advice to us — we were to run no undue risks, yet to shun none that duty demanded. "In a word, dear boys," he said, — it was almost as if he were talking to us, — "you are to be men, as I am sure you will be, after my own heart, and God bless and keep you both!"

"And now," I asked, when we had read the letters, "shall we start for the army at once, Frederic?"

"No," he answered, smiling. "We are still posted here, you know, Stewart. But I will send this letter forward to the general. I am sure he will not disappoint us."

Nor did he, though the period of waiting was a trying one. But finally the order came, directing us to join his staff with the next convoy of supplies, and detailing two other subalterns to our places at the fort.

It was pouring torrents on that October morning when we started northward into the forest. A road twenty feet wide had been cut with infinite labor, but was so soft that the horses sank almost knee-deep at every step, and more than once were mired. We pushed forward resolutely, determined to join the army in the shortest possible

time, knowing that the supplies we brought were badly needed — and fearing that an engagement might be fought before we reached it. By sundown we made a point on the Big Miami, twenty-three miles forward, where the army had halted for a time and built a fort which the general had christened Hamilton. It had been built in just fourteen days, and as I walked around it that night, I began to realize what a labor for Hercules this campaign was — indeed, how vast an amount of work had been expended in this one spot. The ground had been cleared where the fort was to stand, and for some hundred yards about it; its circuit was a thousand feet, through the whole length of which a trench three feet deep had been dug to set the pickets in; two thousand trees for pickets had been cleared of their branches, cut into lengths of twenty feet, carried to the trench, butted, hewed so that they should fit tightly side by side, and set upright; along the top was run the riband, and every log pinned firmly to it; the trench was filled again, and the earth rammed tightly down; another trench was dug outside to carry off the water; bastions were constructed to cover the angles, loopholes cut, barracks built for a hundred men, and a smaller one for officers, guard-room, and storehouse; gates and platforms were made of planks sawed out by hand. And this was only the beginning, for a road ninety miles long was to be cut through the forest and two other fortifications built. Small wonder I lay awake that night thinking of all this, — admiring

the man who dared attempt it with the sorry tools afforded him!

At sunrise we pressed on again, fording the river two miles above the fort. We passed four encampments in the course of the day, and finally came up with the militia under Colonel Oldham, straggling along the road some miles in the rear of the main body. We reached the army just as it was encamping, and reported at once to the general, whom we found very ill with a rheumatic asthma. He gave us a warm hand-clasp, but could not speak, and it was our old friend, Malartie, who presented us to a new member of the general's family, Major Ebenezer Denny, whom we found a brave and experienced soldier. As we sat around our fire that night, smoking, it was plain from the others' faces they were in no cheerful mood, though only Malartie, with Gascon frankness, spoke his mind.

"This whole force," he declared, "is, for the most part, nothing but a lot of incompetents. If the general were well, all this would be different; but he has been bedridden for a week, and to my mind is growing worse instead of better. But for Colonel Sargent here, we should have gone to pieces utterly."

"Nonsense, my friend," protested Sargent. "You have worked as hard as any of us, and to as much purpose. But we can't make silk purses out of sows' ears. Come and see."

We followed him out into the camp, and saw there a disgusting sight. The men were crouched

in close-packed groups about their fires, shivering with cold, glancing every moment fearfully over their shoulders at the black and threatening depths of the forest, talking together in whispers, starting at every sound.

“Suppose the Indians should attack us now,” said Colonel Sargent, “what defense, think you, would these fellows make? Why, they would run at the first yell. There are scarce three hundred trained soldiers in the whole force — those of the first regiment, under Major Hamtramck, who have seen some service. And yet,” he added, “the fault is not wholly theirs. They are already on short rations, and a man with an empty stomach is only half a man.”

We went back to our quarters thoughtfully enough. Plainly a strong hand was needed, and with the general ill, things were come to a desperate pass indeed. Next morning we had another instance of incompetence, for the men detailed to guard the horses had permitted them to roam away into the forest, and four hours were consumed in catching them; so that noon had almost come before the march began. We made five miles that day, and so it was the next day and the next, when we arrived at the edge of a great wet prairie, which the army could not cross. A day was spent in finding a way around it, and when we had at last got past, it was decided to halt and erect another stockade to secure the sick and such surplus supplies as might be sent forward. The general was somewhat better, and his first act was

to write a scorching letter to the rascally contractors who were threatening the army with starvation and the campaign with ruin. He sent Quartermaster-General Hodgden back to Fort Washington to take personal charge of the transport, instructing him minutely in what was expected of him — instructions, I am bound to say, which did but little good.

Meanwhile, two hundred men were employed under Major Ferguson at the new fort, which was to be a square work, with curtains of thirty-five yards and a bastion at each corner ; but though the officers worked in the trenches with the men, it went ahead but slowly. The wet season had set in in earnest, and for three days and nights the rain descended in torrents, flooding the camp, soaking tents and clothing, and bringing the militia to the verge of mutiny. The time for which the levies had enlisted began to expire, and one morning all the troops from Virginia claimed their discharge and marched out of camp with a rejoicing they made no effort to conceal. The army was on half rations again and the forage for horses and cattle so scant that every afternoon half the force off duty was compelled to turn out and bring grass from the prairie to serve them over night.

The militia, openly mutinous at last, began to desert by dozens. Some of them were caught upon the road ; others got clear away. And then, just at the moment when affairs were at their very worst and the officers in despair, there came a

sudden improvement in the general's condition. The asthma and colic changed back to his old enemy, gout in the left hand and arm, which, though painful enough, left stomach and chest relieved and the racking cough quite gone.

"Thank God!" he said. "I can be of some use again. But first, I must have a council. Will you summon my officers, gentlemen?"

We hurried away upon the errand, joyful enough that something was to be done at last, and in ten minutes the council had assembled about his cot, — General Butler, himself weighted down by fever, Colonel Sargent, Colonel Oldham, Colonel Gibson, Colonel Darke, Major Hamtramck, and Major Ferguson. We retired to the little outer room, — headquarters had been established in the first rude cabin built, — and there we found Malartie sitting. He made room for us beside him, with an ominous shake of the head towards the company assembled in the inner room.

"There was need of it," he said in a low tone, staring gloomily at the floor.

We sat silent a moment, and then the sound of voices came to us through the open door.

"I have called you together, gentlemen," the general was saying, "for a conference before we take up the advance."

"We are going to advance, then?" asked a voice.

"Certainly, my dear Oldham. I have no discretion in the matter. The stockade here is almost done, and my positive instructions are to

push on to the Miami villages; destroy them, and erect a strong and permanent fortification there."

"But that was the very thing you wished to do last year, sir, when General Harmar was on the ground," cried a voice, "and which General Knox refused you because of the expense."

It was true enough, as every one present knew, and we could hear the bitter laugh that ran around the room.

"We will not criticise our superiors, gentlemen," said the general quietly. "'Tis enough that we are commanded to do it now."

"It cannot be done without a battle, sir."

"And need we fear a battle?"

"With troops from brothel and prison; without food; armed with powder that has been sunk in the Ohio; with the savages gathering in great force — we have small reason to seek it, sir."

"Let us have your opinion, General Butler," said the commander, with a sigh of pain.

"Why, sir," began Butler, "since the government has failed in its engagements, I see not how it can hold you to yours, and expect you to accomplish miracles. I should say you would be perfectly justified in resting content with the building of this fort and postponing further advance until spring, when there will be forage for the horses, and by which time we can drill an army into shape."

There was a little murmur of approbation, then the general lay back wearily in his bed.

"This accursed gout weakens me," he said. "I

will think over your advice. I thank you, sirs."

They passed out silently, and presently we went in to receive any further commands he might have for us. He was lying back upon his blankets with face drawn and lips ashy gray, and a despair in his eyes that shocked me. How old and weak and helpless — and how I loved him!

"I fear they have given me more than I can bear," he said with a wan smile. "Yet I must do my duty. I think that I can sleep now; will you preserve me from disturbance, save in case of need?"

We stationed ourselves without the door, and it must have been a great need, indeed, that would have persuaded us to waken him. All afternoon he slept — the sleep of utter exhaustion — and all evening and all through the night, while we took turns in standing sentinel. With the first gleam of morning he awoke, stronger and better in every way than he had been for weeks.

"That was kind of you, sirs," he said, when he learned how we had guarded him. "I had not thought to ask so much of you."

So much! But that was ever his way. Yet he could be stern enough, if need be, as we had cause to know that very day, for two artillerymen, who were taken while deserting to the enemy, and one of the militia, who had murdered a comrade, were hanged upon the grand parade, with the whole army drawn up to witness it. And while we were thus assembled, general orders were read naming

the fort Jefferson, and ordering the advance to begin at daybreak.

When the morning came, the general was again so ill that it seemed certain he must be left behind ; but he would not hear of it, so we rigged up a rude litter and had him borne along by four men. Our road lay along an old Indian trail, which helped us somewhat, but the horses were so nearly done that we had covered but six miles by night-fall. That night the rains set in again, and as the rations were almost gone, we were forced to remain encamped, and near a week dragged away before we could move forward without certainty of starvation.

Meanwhile, it became every day more evident that the Indians were gathering in great force to oppose us. Stragglers from camp were shot or tomahawked ; a party of militia came suddenly upon a camp of them, but permitted them to escape ; our rangers reported Indian signs everywhere about us.

The general continued very ill, but he nevertheless directed new precautions to guard against surprise. It was ordered that a close chain of sentries be posted about the entire camp and that every morning at daybreak all the troops be under arms at the first drum-tap, and continue paraded until dismissed. One of the sentries created dire confusion the very first night, for he fancied he saw an Indian stealing upon him and fired three times, and the whole force was got under arms before the mistake was discovered.

There was a little creek at our front across which a bridge was thrown, and a large party was sent forward to open a road for the army, which, with desertions and discharges and sickness, had been reduced to less than eighteen hundred men. At last we were ready to march again, and lumbered forward seven miles. Again there was a delay of two days, for rations were quite gone and the horses so exhausted they could not proceed.

Here the militia broke out in open mutiny. Near a third of them turned out and declared their intention to return to Fort Washington rather than go forward into the wilderness to starve, and finally marched away, swearing to stop the pack-train that was coming to our relief. There was only one thing to be done, and the first regiment, under Major Hamtramck, the only soldiers we had with us who could be trusted, was at once sent after them, not so much in hope of bringing them back as to save us our provision.

It would have been best, perhaps, to remain encamped until the regiment returned, but the season was so far advanced the campaign could not continue, and the general determined to leave the heavier baggage and make a dash for the Miami villages, thirty miles away. Again a party was sent forward to open the road, and we toiled northward eight miles, through a swampy country where the artillery was mired a dozen times. Nine miles we made the day following, the third of November, and camped upon the bank of a little creek about twenty yards in width.

The nature of the ground compelled us to contract the lines, for the dry land was insufficient to encamp the army in the usual order. The militia was advanced some three hundred yards across the creek, and the remainder of the force disposed in two lines, having the creek in front. The right wing, composed of Butler's, Clarke's and Patterson's battalions, formed the first line; and the left wing, consisting of Bedinger's and Gaither's battalions and the second regiment, formed the second. They were about seventy yards apart, the utmost the ground would allow. The right flank seemed well secured by the creek, a steep bank, and Faulkener's corps, while the cavalry and their pickets covered the left. Despite this, however, the general wished to throw up some slight intrenchments, but we had got to camp so late and the men were so weary, that it was deemed impracticable.

There was frequent firing among the sentinels as the night advanced, and the general finally sent Major Denny and myself to General Butler's tent with orders to request him to send out an intelligent officer and a sufficient party to reconnoitre thoroughly and ascertain if the enemy was near. Captain Slough, two subalterns, and thirty men were at once paraded for the purpose, and General Butler gave them particular verbal orders how to proceed. We returned to the general's tent, but found him not yet satisfied. Doubtless the last advice of his commander-in-chief was ringing in his ears.

“There must be further precautions against surprise,” he said, turning wearily on his cot. “If I could but shake off this cursed illness! Go to Colonel Oldham, who is in advance with the militia, and order him to send out an hour before day-break, and as much earlier as possible, five patrols of twenty men, each with an officer, to discover the position of the savages.”

This, too, we did, and then, confident that the enemy could not come upon us unaware, I sought my blankets, quite exhausted with the labors of the day.

CHAPTER XX

A SECOND BRADDOCK

THE tap of the drum brought me from my blankets at dawn, and I hurried forth to find the troops already under arms. They were dismissed in a moment for breakfast, and I started for the general's tent, when I came suddenly on Captain Slough.

"So there were no Indians?" I asked, remembering his mission of the night before.

"On the contrary," he answered, "there were so many that I had to return to the lines."

"So many!"

"Yes — they seemed to be advancing in force, all along our front, as though preparing for an attack."

"Has the general been told of this?" I questioned.

"I reported to General Butler and suggested that I had better report also to the commander, but he said that he would do it."

I hurried on to headquarters, weighted with anxiety. If the general had not been told! I must have burst into the tent abruptly, for he started to his elbow.

"What is it, sir?" he asked.

I told him of Slough's discovery. At the first

words he threw back his blanket, pulled himself upright and groped for his clothes with a shaking hand.

"I must get up," he said, between his teeth. "I must get up. Butler told me nothing. Come, help me, sir! These boots are too much for me."

"But you are ill," I protested. "You will kill yourself!"

"Nonsense! Help me, I say!" and we got the boots on after a struggle. "Whom have we here?"

It was Colonel Sargent, who came in much as I had done, with a very white face.

"I met Colonel Oldham a moment since, sir," he began. "He told me that he had not yet sent out the scouting parties you ordered."

I saw the general's face turn gray as he staggered to his feet.

"Help me, gentlemen!" he cried. "I smell disaster!"

Colonel Sargent would have held him back, but he shook him off fiercely.

"I must go," he repeated. "Would you have me be a second Braddock?"

The words were scarce spoken when there came a great burst of yells and firing from the front, and snatching up an old hat and cappa coat, the general rushed from the tent. We were just in time to see the militia, routed at the first fire, come tearing pellmell across the creek into the camp. The first line, which had sprung to arms, was thrown into confusion, but General Butler walked up and down it rallying the men and exhorting them to return

the fire of the savages, which was rapidly spreading along both flanks. The second line, which had formed in good order, wheeled to right and left to repel this flank attack, and in a moment Ferguson's cannon opened.

As I look back upon that scene, I realize how powerless I am to paint it. I can hear again the thunder of the guns, the yells of the savages, the cracking of the muskets, the groans of the wounded, the curses of the living, the screams of maddened horses ; I can see again the spurts of flame from the forest, each with death behind it, and men falling front and rear ; I can smell the acrid smoke — I can live the day through again — but to make another do it is far beyond my skill.

We followed the general up and down the lines, ready to do his bidding, marveling at his calmness. The shock of battle had shaken his illness from him ; he was again the cool, quick-witted commander, heartening the men, ordering the ranks ; and when the left wing gave way, as it did presently, he himself led the charge that drove the savages back and regained the ground. I saw that they had picked him out, for one bullet cut away a lock of hair and another clipped a button from his coat, but he never wavered. It made one's heart leap to look at him.

His horses — he had four — did him no service. The first was shot through the head at the instant of mounting, the second as it was being saddled, the third before it could be brought to him, and the fourth was killed under Malartie, whose own

had died upon the march. After that, we were all on foot, and I wondered at his strength and resolution — he who, an hour before, had been stretched helpless upon his cot.

For near two hours our men stood their ground, with greater bravery than I had reckoned on, firing blindly at an enemy they could not see; then they began to waver. Small wonder, for the fire from the forest had cut down a third of them and not one officer in five was on his feet. Oldham was dead, Hart was dead, Clarke was dead. Ferguson had been shot through the heart in a desperate attempt to keep his cannon going, and lay, with a dozen more, scalped about the guns: for the savages had crept up under cover of the smoke and done their ghastly work. Sargent was shot in the shoulder and Malartie through the arm, but neither would retire. General Butler fell with a bullet through his body and was carried to the centre of the camp, with the ever-growing crowd of wounded, and propped up with his back against a knapsack, whence he continued to exhort his men.

The craven militia, which had fled at the first attack, were huddled about the fires, shaking as with ague, and twice the general formed them, and tried to lead them against the enemy; but twice they broke and fled. At that his patience quite deserted him, and he snatched his pistols out and came back upon them, his face like a thundercloud.

“Now, you damned cowards,” he shouted, “either you follow me, or I’ll send you to hell!”

I verily believe he would have done it, but that

they faltered into line and followed him in a charge across the brook at our front. But it availed nothing, for the savages fled away like phantoms through the forest, only to return when the line had been withdrawn, lest it be cut off utterly. As for me, I confess that I had long since lost my coolness. The sight of officers and men falling by scores about me filled me with dull rage at our impotence to return blow for blow. There was something indescribably ghastly about it, — something that chilled the blood, — for we seemed to be fighting a horde of shadows which we could not touch. I saw the lines break and retreat; the cannon were long since silenced, spiked, and abandoned; the men crowded together to the centre of the camp, and every moment the fire from the forest grew more deadly.

“We have lost,” groaned St. Clair at last, looking at this disordered, panic-stricken mob. “We must retreat while we can. Collect the wounded.”

We placed them on such horses as we had, but it was evident we could not take them all, and it sickened me to think of the fate of those that must be left. Yet many proved themselves heroes in that moment, begging that we leave them to their fate and save ourselves. An old packhorse, that could scarce be pricked out of a walk, was got for the general, who was near fainting, and he placed himself at the head of the little force which was to make the last desperate charge to secure the road of retreat. He gave the word, a bugle note rose above the din, and at the signal the men lost

their last remnant of reason. In a frenzied mob they dashed toward the narrow road by which we had come, forgetful of discipline, of the wounded, of everything save a burning desire to escape.

"Come, sir," cried Major Denny to the general, who sat with set face watching this rout.

"A second Braddock!" he groaned. "A second Braddock!" and I saw that his lips were flecked with blood.

"Come, sir, we must go," cried Denny again, and caught the general's horse by the bridle.

But the general jerked it from his hand.

"Not till the last," he said. "We must get a rearguard together, or the whole force will be cut down," and we stood beside him until the rear of the rabble had swept past. Then, with a last look at the field, at the mounds of dead and wounded, at the savages pouring over it to finish their deadly work, he turned and rode slowly after.

But the Indians, who had given way at first, saw the object of the movement, and a sharp fusillade began from either side, while, looking back, I could see the horde coming after us. The others saw it, and flung away guns, accoutrements, even clothing, that they might flee faster. Strong men trampled on weak, the wounded were flung aside . . .

I saw Captain Purdy, who had been shot through the hip, hurled roughly headlong, and totter and fall into a thicket of underbrush by the roadside. Hot with wrath, I ran to him and stooped to pick him up. He looked up at me with a wan little smile, as I got my arms about him, and then . . .

CHAPTER XXI

AWAKENING

SOME one was slapping me savagely in the face, and I opened my eyes to find that it was Purdy. Astonishment changed to anger as he struck me mercilessly again.

"Thank God!" he whispered. "'T was only a spent ball — you are all right again. You must get out of this, Randolph. The savages have gone past in pursuit of the army, but they will soon be back."

I saw that I had fallen with him into the thicket of underbrush.

"You must go," he urged. "They may burst in here at any instant. Good-by and God keep you."

I wiped the blood from my face, — it was streaming from a long scalp wound, — and looked at him.

"But you?" I asked.

"You can do nothing for me," he protested earnestly. "My legs seem paralyzed. You simply throw away your life by staying here."

It was true enough; and yet to go seemed such a coward's part!

"Good-by, my friend," he repeated, and held

out his hand. "You did what you could to save me."

There was no time to hesitate, and steeling my heart, I rose cautiously to my knees and peered about me. I could hear a great clatter of firing down the road, but could see no Indians. I glanced despairingly at Purdy.

"Good-by," he said again quietly. "Stay, there is one thing you can do. Give me your knife. I have lost mine. At least, I can die fighting."

There was such a choking in my throat I could not speak, but I gave him the knife, wrung his hand, and made off through the underbrush before my resolution failed me. I dared not go too far from the road, lest I lose myself in the wilderness, so turned at last and pressed forward toward the firing, intending to make a wide *détour* and so join our troops. As I toiled on through the underbrush, other sounds began to fall upon my ears, — groans, shrieks, cries for mercy, — and I knew that the savages were cutting down the laggards in the rear, the wounded, and exhausted. But I had little time to think of them, for just as I turned again away from the road, three Indians burst out of the forest ahead.

For a moment they did not see me, and I stood stock-still, praying that they would pass; then I felt a pair of gleaming eyes staring into mine, and with a wild yell they were after me. Over stumps and fallen trees I went, through tangles of vines and creepers — stumbling, slipping, staggering for-

ward, until it seemed my very heart must burst. I could hear them drawing near and nearer — why did they not shoot? — near and nearer, until my hair crawled upward on my scalp as the hatchet seemed to hover over it; when — horrors! — a great ditch opened suddenly before me. I gathered all my strength and sprang for the farther side, fell short a foot, and went downward and backward, clutching at the air. For an instant I closed my eyes, thinking the end had come, not daring to see the blow. Then I opened them to find my pursuers standing over me. They motioned me to rise and I got weakly to my feet. Instantly one of them pinioned my arms behind me with a rawhide thong.

You who have never looked into the face of death cannot know the rapture of reprieve, though it be only for an hour. What a wave of thankfulness swept over me when I understood that they intended merely to take me prisoner! For a moment I turned sick and faint, and thought that I should fall, but one of them caught me and held me upright until the feeling passed. I had, of course, heard a hundred tales of the fate reserved for prisoners, — of the gauntlet and the stake, — but life was life while it lasted, and I drew in deep breaths of the good air as though I had been shut out from it for ages. One of them held a knife to my breast to indicate my fate should I attempt escape, and then led the way, while the other two came after, back to the road.

There I saw a sight that haunts me now and

then, even yet. Up and down it lay the bodies of our soldiers, stripped and hacked, each with its head in a little pool of blood. The firing in the rear had almost ceased, and looking back, I saw that the savages had stopped from the pursuit and were pressing toward us, lustful for scalps and booty. My captors urged me to a run, and in a moment we were back upon the field. I was lashed firmly to a sapling, and one of them remained to guard me while the others hastened away.

Of the horror of butchery that followed, one incident only need be mentioned here. In the terror and disorder of the flight, General Butler had been left behind with the other wounded. His hurt was doubtless mortal, for I could see him writhing with agony, and as he lay there a savage stopped before him, and the dying man implored him to end his misery.

"Can't do it, general," the seeming savage answered, to my great astonishment, "but I'll git some 'n' else t' obleege y'."

He called to one of the passing warriors, said a few rapid words to him, and the latter, on the instant, raised his tomahawk and buried its blade in the head of the prostrate man. Then he bent over him, and with a yell of exultation tore off the scalp. Nor was that all, for a moment later, two other warriors coming up, under orders from the first one, ripped open the body, cut out the heart, and divided it into a dozen pieces, one, as I afterwards learned, for each of the tribes present.

The fiend who had ordered this piece of savagery swung on his heel and came toward me, but not until he was quite near did I see he was a white man. He was short and thickset, with hair and eyes as black as any Indian's, and he wore the Indian costume ; but he had no scalplock, a bright silk handkerchief being bound tightly about his head. He stopped before me and looked at me a moment with glittering eyes. Then he turned and exchanged a few rapid words with the Indian who was guarding me.

"So," he sneered, turning again to me, "y' run away, like th' rest of 'em !"

I looked back at him without answering, marveling that any but a savage could stand unmoved amid this slaughter. He, perhaps, caught the meaning of my look, for he laughed bitterly as he glanced about him.

"Yes, I 'm white," he said, "but I never got nothin' but abuse from white men, —leastways Americans, —so I turned Injun. Maybe you've heard o' me — Simon Girty ?"

He spoke the name with an intonation which told how proud of it he was, and he laughed again as he saw my look of loathing.

"An' you'll hear more o' me," he added viciously. "How many men did St. Clair have ?"

"About fourteen hundred," I answered.

"An' we hed only twelve hunderd — yes, an' three hunderd o' them was left two mile back t' watch th' ho'ses ! We must 'a' killed mighty nigh a man apiece," he added exultantly.

I looked over the field, piled with bleeding bodies, and saw how nearly right he was.

“Well, I’ll see y’ agin,” he said. “They’re goin’ t’ take y’ up t’ th’ Glaize,” and he walked away to claim his share of the booty.

How busy the fiends were! My two captives made half a dozen trips from my tree to the field, returning each time laden with plunder, — muskets, knives, clothing, and finally a handsome markee tent, which I recognized as General Butler’s. Then a great crowd of squaws burst upon the field and fell to helping their masters. Yes — and something else I saw — a company of Canadians, commanded by two British officers, that had taken part in the battle!

But let me hasten. The booty was collected, the last scalp taken. The horses were driven up and loaded, the women bent submissive backs to almost equal burdens; I was loosed from the tree, a pack was lashed upon my back, and our little party went off slowly toward the north. We had only one horse, but each of the three men had brought a woman, so that their share of the booty was considerable.

We made eight or nine miles ere sunset, and camped in a little hollow. Snow had begun to fall in the afternoon, and the men threw up a shelter of boughs, while the women roasted over the fire a raccoon which one of the men had shot. It was roasted whole, without dressing or preparation of any kind, but I had eaten nothing since the night before and so was hungry enough to

relish anything. They released my hands that I might eat and treated me good naturedly enough, partly, no doubt, because so greatly pleased at the result of the day's battle. In fact, one of them came as near jesting that night as I ever knew an Indian to do, for while we were sitting about the fire, he built a little snake fence out of twigs, then taking from his pocket a grain of corn wrapped in a piece of paper, he planted it near the fence, and looking at me, uttered the one word, "Squaw!" I nodded to show that I understood, whereat he gravely dug up the grain of corn and restored it to his pocket, the others looking on impassively. But I knew what my work and station were to be henceforth, — lowly enough, yet infinitely better than the stake.

Before they lay down for the night, they tied my hands again, and bound a rope of rawhide about my body and either end about themselves. Then they calmly went to sleep, assured that I could not escape. Indeed, I did not even try. In the first moments, I was burning for the venture, but a little thought convinced me how foolhardy it would be. Even could I slip away unseen — which was most unlikely — the woods were full of savages, and I, unskilled in woodcraft, must certainly fall foul of some of them. What the result would be I knew quite well, and so, at last, I decided to await a better moment.

The moon came up as I lay there staring out into the forest, and shot long, silvery beams quivering down among the trees. Here and there they

touched the snow to a strange brilliancy. All about us the wilderness lay silent and asleep. It seemed I must have dreamed it — that battle in the early morning, that slaughter of brave men! Yet I knew that it was not a dream — I knew that only a few miles away, seven hundred of my comrades lay naked in the moonlight, each with his crown of blood.

CHAPTER XXII

I FIND A FRIEND

WE were up at dawn, and off again through the forest, after a hasty meal. We soon struck a trail which seemed much traveled, but during the whole day met no one. As the hours passed, my pack grew almost insupportable, and, at the end, I was stumbling like a drunken man; yet the women seemed not to feel their burdens, which were even heavier than mine, but pressed on with a dogged endurance, which astonished and shamed me, it so outdid my own. Toward evening, one of my captors shot a turkey, and this we had for supper.

By noon of the next day we came to the bank of the Auglaize, where, after a short search, two long canoes were drawn from beneath a pile of drift. Into one of these the loot was loaded, and the women clambered into it and paddled away. Two of my captors and I got into the other, while the third rode away on the horse. We pushed out into the middle of the stream, and were soon spinning along at a lively rate. We caught up with the women in the course of half an hour, and after a lively interchange of compliments at their lack of diligence, they bent sweating to the paddles and kept on ahead of us.

We must have made thirty miles before dark, but it was not until afternoon of the next day that we reached our destination, the Maumee, where there was quite an Indian town. I was surprised that we did not enter it at once; but we camped just outside, and at dawn made elaborate preparations for our entrance.

And here I began to regret that I had not tried escape, for I was plainly destined for some important ceremony. They cut my hair as closely as they could, leaving only forelock and scalplock, tying them up with little strips of tin, and weaving in a dozen tail feathers from the turkey they had killed two days before. They got out a little box filled with red pigment, and daubed me over brow and cheeks. They ornamented themselves in like manner, and then, the women following laden with the booty, we set off toward the town. We were soon met by a great crowd of Indians, mostly old men and women and small children, who, as soon as they saw me, separated into two lines about twelve feet apart, and waited my coming. I knew what was toward, for I had heard often of the gauntlet; but I saw no great reason for alarm, since none of them was armed with anything more formidable than a hickory pole.

So I looked at my captors for instructions, and when they motioned me forward, away I went between the lines as fast as my feet would carry me, reasoning that the quicker I got through the fewer blows I should receive. I got enough as it was, for they banged me over the head and across

the shoulders, with little grunts of satisfaction, in a way that left me sore for a week. They ran me down to the river and would have begun all over again, but that one of my captors intervened, — the tallest of them, the one who had told me I was to be a squaw, — and permitted me to wash off the blood from a little scalp wound, which I did but gingerly, since my old one was still very sore. I could not help laughing as I stood up again, for the event had been so much less dreadful than I had feared, and they all stood around regarding me so solemnly. He stared at me for a moment, and then strode up and linked his arm through mine.

“Man,” he said. “No squaw! Come,” and he led me away to where the women were struggling with the markee. I soon had it untangled, and we put it up and staked it firmly down, for it was to be our home henceforth, instead of the bark cabin that had sheltered them hitherto. Their few belongings were moved into the new quarters, and the change was complete.

Beside my captor’s wife, there lived with us in the tent his mother, an old and wrinkled hag, and two children, a boy and a girl, who belonged to an Indian woman, then the mistress of George Ironside, a British trader living at the station on the point just above the mouth of the Auglaize. The boy was said to be the son of Simon Girty, and he was certainly passionate and willful enough to be born of such a father. His mother came occasionally to see him and bring him some little gewgaw, and she always called him Si-mo-ne. By

common consent, it seemed, I was christened Lay-law-she, or "He-who-runs-away," a name given me without any thought of ridicule or mockery.

There is no need that I should detail here the slow and painful way in which I gained a knowledge of the Delaware tongue. I gleaned it word by word as the weeks passed, and soon knew enough to catch the meaning of what was said to me, the more easily since all the Indians knew a little English. The man who had adopted me — for it seems that the linking of arms and leading me away constituted that ceremony — was named Whingwy Pooshies, or Big Cat, and a considerable affection sprang up between us. He was a great tall fellow, well on toward middle age, and perhaps his liking for me was fostered by the fact that he had no children of his own. Certainly, from first to last, he used me with the utmost kindness.

He took me with him for visits of ceremony to his relatives, who received us always in impressive silence, but never failed to produce some food, usually a kind of soup of dried green corn, boiled with beans and dried pumpkin. We went, of course, to Buckongehelas, the chief of the Delawares, and even as far as the Seneca town, at the rapids fifty miles below, that we might pay our respects to Blue Jacket. I shall not soon forget the appearance of that redoubtable chieftain, gorgeous in a British uniform, — the scarlet frock, laced with gold, confined about the waist by a sash of blue and crimson, with gold epaulettes on his

shoulders, and on his arms broad silver bracelets, while from his neck there hung a massive silver gorget and a large medallion of his Majesty, George III. About his lodge hung rifles and war-clubs, spears and arrows, while the floor was covered with the skins of deer and bear and panther. His face, with its high forehead, piercing eyes, aquiline nose, and wide mouth, impressed me as unusually intelligent and strong.

His wife was a remarkably fine-looking woman, much lighter than the usual Indian, and she brought out the inevitable food, assisted by her two daughters. They seemed to me perfect types of Spanish beauty, and the younger especially drew my eyes. But they lingered only a moment.

"Will the white man come again to fight the red man?" asked Blue Jacket, when we had eaten the food and sat together some half hour without uttering a word.

"Oh, yes," I said.

"You come from the rising sun?"

I nodded, for I knew he meant the country beyond the mountains.

"Many white men there?"

"As many as the leaves on the trees," and I waved my hand toward the forest opposite, deciding that a little exaggeration could do no harm.

He sat for a long time without speaking.

"We will beat them," he said at last. "We will drive them back across the Big River. They know not how to fight."

I shook my head. "You will never drive them

back. Some day one will come who knows how to fight — it were well to make peace before that day.”

A dozen times at least I repeated these words to the different chiefs, but they were thinking of anything but peace. The loot from our army had made them rich in everything an Indian needs; the British were urging them on, giving them guns and powder and promising them aid. Indeed, twice every year there was a great gathering at the rapids, where the British distributed gifts, — tinsel, blankets, rum; where new rifles were given for old, and new knives for broken ones. And always and ever was dinned into their ears the statement that the British were their true friends and the Americans their relentless enemies, who itched to steal their lands.

Spring came, and with it the planting of the corn. Big Cat's wife and mother, armed with little hoes, sallied forth to the bottom, opened up some two acres of the soft ground, and planted their treasured seed. Then his wife awaited anxiously the first moonless night, when she slipped from the tent and hurried to the field. There she stripped herself and walked rapidly around it, dragging her garments after her, to insure a prolific crop and guard against the assaults of worms and insects, which could not cross this enchanted line. All the matrons in the valley were performing the same rite, while the men kept close at home that it might go forward unprofaned. The rich earth did its work well, and soon all up and down the river the dark green stalks

were waving. The corn was not fenced, as the horses were kept back from the river on the high ground, and the whole work of its care and cultivation fell upon the women, Big Cat sternly forbidding me when I offered to assist them. Our work, it seemed, was to fish and hunt.

My first experience at fishing was most doleful. I had caught a string of catfish, than which there is none sweeter, and bore them proudly to the tent; but in the door Big Cat met me, and with a single glance at them tore them from my hand and flung them fifty feet away. And while I stared, astonished, he explained that any scaleless fish was unclean and not to be eaten. They had other prejudices, I found, for they would not eat rabbit, and pork only when there was nothing else.

With the first ripening of the corn, a great feast offering was made to Manito. A hundred fires were kindled to prepare the grain for him, and all the people joined in the sacred — and somewhat revolting — rites. The first game of every hunt was offered in like manner, — skinned and dressed whole, roasted over a great fire, eaten of by each member of the party, and then burned entirely.

As I look back over that period of my life, it amuses me to remember how concerned I was lest I “turn Indian,” and lose the wish to leave them, as so many captives did. The danger was the greater because I found the wild wood-life so fascinating, and because those were plenteous times with us and without hardship. There were no more raids against us, and our corn ripened undis-

turbed ; game grew plentiful again, and our tent was stocked with everything we needed for our comfort. I suffered somewhat from the cold of the first winter, but felt it little afterward. Now and again a band of warriors would pass through the town on their way to Detroit after a raid against the settlements, and the scalps swinging at their belts would give me a moment of revulsion ; but it was all so far away — the fighting, the border settlements, home — that the impression quickly passed.

Astonished at this, and fearing for the result, I made it a rule to spend at least an hour every evening thinking over the old life, and recalling its incidents. This I did, almost without exception, while I remained a captive, and to it I doubtless owe the memory of many things which otherwise I had long since forgotten. I would start with my very earliest recollection — of that dinner at Berkeley, of Arnold's visit — and proceed thence year by year, so that memories buried in dim corners of my brain were brought one by one to light. And ever and ever I thought of Frederic and of Ruth. Had he escaped from the battle, — had he gone back to Riverview ? Drawn by his love I knew he must be, and won by it must Ruth be in the end. Perhaps they were already wedded, — much may happen in two years ! — and how often did I look up at the bright, friendly stars, and pray for them ! Ruth and Frederic — Frederic and Ruth — the light and the dark — the sunshine and the shadow, — they were with me always, an

undertone to my thoughts, a background for every fancy. And I think, living thus with them, I came to love them both more dearly than ever.

During these hours of reverie, Big Cat sat often with me, saying never a word, thinking perhaps of his own past. The subject of those intervals of long and seemingly profound meditation which are so common with them was one of the mysteries of Indian life I never penetrated.

It was in the fall of that year I first saw the "Garden of the Earth," as the Indians called that valley where Frederic and I had hoped to place our claims. It was the time for securing the winter's supply of meat, and a hunt was organized, including, besides Big Cat and myself, eight other men and three old women. We paddled up the Auglaize to its head, consuming three days on the trip, and then made a long portage to the headwaters of the Scioto. Along its banks game was very plentiful, but we dropped down the river some fifty miles before we established our quarters by building a cabin of bark and erecting a platform upon which our catch might be kept in safety until we were ready to return. Deer were especially plentiful that year, and the women were kept busy drying the meat and stretching the skins. Most of this hunting was done by night. The deer came down to the river to eat a kind of watercress, and seemed fascinated by a torch in the bow of our canoe, usually permitting us to float so near that they were shot quite easily. One night we got twelve deer in this way, and as this would keep

the women busy for some days, it was proposed by Big Cat that we paddle down the river to the Shawanese towns. I was eager to go, but the other braves preferred to idle in camp; so next morning he and I set off alone together.

For many miles the river flowed along between broad bottoms, densely wooded with maple and sycamore. Gradually its course deepened into a valley, with low hills far back on either side, but these finally fell so far away that they were lost to sight. That night we stopped at a little Kickapoo village on the Great Plains, whither Lord Dunmore had marched on his memorable expedition, nearly twenty years before. It consisted of fifteen or twenty squalid cabins, and Big Cat explained to me that the better part of the tribe had moved westward to the Wabash, and left this broad plain to this remnant and to the mongrel Mingoes. Yet they treated us hospitably enough, gave us of the best they had to eat, and told us a piece of news that made my heart leap. Another great force was assembling along the Big River to march against the Indians, — the greatest the white man had ever mustered! I tried to blot all trace of feeling from my face, but I fear the eyes of my companion read all I would have hidden. He made no comment, only that evening seemed more taciturn than usual.

We were off again at dawn, and soon left the plain behind, entering a broad and beautiful valley, with the rounded hills growing ever higher and more near, until at last, after a long sweep to

the right, in the effort to escape, the river was forced back again and hurried past the foot of a high precipice. Here Big Cat ran the canoe ashore, and motioning me to follow, clambered rapidly upward. Near the top we found a great bare boulder half buried in the mountain-side, whence the broad valley lay stretched before us. To right and left, far as the eye could see, hills fell away in endless succession; at our feet the river hurried between its banks, anxious to escape into the meadows below; beyond it, for three miles or more, a level bottom stretched to the foot of another range of hills, purple in the distance.

"This is the land the white man covets," said Big Cat with a broad sweep of his arm, "but which he is not strong enough to steal."

"Remember the story we heard yesterday," I said. "The white man arms again."

"Let him," and Big Cat's lips curled disdainfully. "He will bring us scalps and booty."

I did not answer, for indeed I feared it might be even so. And presently we descended to our boat again, dropped down the river some miles farther to the mouth of a creek which Big Cat called the Olomon, and paddled up it to the Shawanese town of Che-le-co-the. It was a considerable one, beautifully located, composed of well-built houses, and surrounded by broad fields of corn. Here, again, we were received with kindness, and in the evening a young chief named Tecumseh came to sit with us. I had never heard of him, but was attracted at once by his beauty

and intelligence. He had, of course, the Indian hair and eyes, but his nose was less arched, his cheek-bones less pronounced, his forehead higher, and his mouth more finely cut than is usual with his race. After the first half hour of meditative silence which courtesy required, he asked me many questions concerning the whites, speaking our language fairly well. I answered him as well as I was able, but could tell him nothing of this new expedition. Indeed, he knew more than I, for he told me that, during the whole summer, forces had been assembling at Fort Pitt, and that a great camp for the winter had been built a few miles below the junction of the rivers. And as he talked, in every word and gesture, in the gleaming of his eyes and the nervous twitching of his mouth, I could read undying hatred of the invader.

We started back next morning up the river, and three days later reached the camp. It was decided that we had meat enough, so the jerk was tied up in the skins, and the canoes loaded. They would hold only half our catch, and with this we paddled up to the portage, and Big Cat and I were left in charge of it there, while the others brought up the remainder. The trip over the portage was a weary one, but at the end of a week, we had the meat all safely stowed away at our home on the Maumee, and settled down to spend the winter in comfortable idleness.

We found the Glaize in a state of great commotion, for a mighty council was being held at the point, under the influence of the two British trad-

ers, Ironside and McKee. Such a gathering of the northwest tribes had never been held before. Forty chiefs came from the Six Nations; fifty from the seven tribes of Canada; a hundred from the twenty-seven nations of the north; from west of the Father of Waters they came, until the Indians themselves could not tell the names of them. And as I looked them over as they passed through the village back and forth to the councils, I realized the magnitude of the task which lay before this new expedition.

For the whole tenor of the councils was for war. The Shawanese chiefs spoke for it; Tarhe, the great sachem of the Wyandots, wished it; Girty, the only white man admitted to the councils, demanded it (thank Heaven, he had forgotten me, and I saw no more of him!). The settlers must be driven back beyond the Ohio — the hour was at hand! It seemed for a time that the whole horde of savages from the northwest would be summoned forthwith to march against the settlements, but the milder counsel of Blue Jacket finally prevailed, and it was decided to consent to an armistice. They would not take up the hatchet until they had heard what the President had to say to them, and a conference was called at the Maumee Rapids for the next spring, when the leaves were fully out. That decision reached, they started on the homeward trail, but not until a party of the Shawanese and Miamis, under Little Turtle, had returned from the south with a great prize of scalps and booty.

CHAPTER XXIII

OPPORTUNITY

THERE was quite a town at the Glaize, as the junction of the Auglaize and Maumee was called, for it was here the British found it most convenient to meet their Indian allies, to purchase peltries from them, and to induce them to maintain unceasing war against the border settlements. The British settlement was on the point between the two rivers, and almost opposite the Delaware town, where, extending some distance up the Auglaize, was an open space, flanked on the west and south by oak woods with hazel undergrowth. Here the cabins were grouped. The most northerly and the largest was that of George Ironside, of whom I have already spoken, the wealthiest and most influential of the traders on the point. It was a large house of hewed logs, and was used as a warehouse, store, and dwelling. Fronting this, and much nearer the river bank, was a small stockade, inclosing two log houses, in one of which lived James Girty, a brother of the renegade Simon, the other being used by the British Indian agents, McKee and Elliott, as a storehouse for arms and ammunition. Next to Ironside's house was the cabin of a French baker named Perault, and then

came the cabin of a Scotchman named McKenzie, a silversmith by trade, who exchanged his earrings, bracelets, and brooches for peltries, reaping an enormous profit. Still farther south were several families of French and English, and there, one day, during one of my infrequent visits to the point, I met two Americans, prisoners like myself, and like myself captured at St. Clair's defeat. They were Henry Ball and his wife, neither of whom I remembered in the slightest, though they said they remembered me quite well ; but I spent many pleasant hours with them. They were being permitted by their masters to work out their ransom, he by boating to the rapids, and she by washing and sewing.

Ball had been a sergeant in one of the companies of levies, and had been so certain of the success of the expedition that he had brought his wife along, intending to locate a tomahawk claim as soon as the campaign ended. She was a fat, motherly woman, with an abounding fund of cheerfulness, which her terrifying experiences had not diminished in the least. Their ransom would be worked out, she told me, in another year, and they were thinking of settling among the Indians as traders.

"But surely," she said to me one day, "a fine young gentleman like yourself don't need t' stay here among th' Injuns! Won't your folks pay your ransom?"

It was a thing that I had thought of more than once, but I knew that my father could not, and

I shrank from calling any further upon Colonel Stewart's bounty. Besides, I had a lively fear of ridicule, and it did seem ridiculous that I, who had been so eager to march against the Indians, should have to be bought back from them like so much merchandise. It would be much more fitting, I concluded, for me to effect my own escape, but a chance had been long in coming. Yes, and one more obstacle lay in the way. I had one day broached the subject of ransom to Big Cat, thinking that I might follow the example of the Balls and work out mine, but he had silenced me with a sentence.

"Does a father take ransom for his son?" he asked, and I knew that if I was to get away, it must be through my own wit and resource.

The months passed, winter changed to spring, and still there was no sign of the expedition we had been told of on the Scioto. Commissioners from the United States met with the Indians, according to the arrangement of the fall before, but the conference was a short one. For the Indians made the peremptory demand that the Ohio be fixed as the southern boundary of their land; to this the commissioners could not agree, and were summarily told by Girty to go home. Guns and ammunition without stint were given to the Indians by the British agents, and to cap the aggression, the governor of Canada, at the head of a force of British regulars, marched to the Maumee rapids, and proceeded to erect a fort there, manned with British cannon and garrisoned by British troops!

I could not credit the talk I heard of this thing, and myself went down to the rapids with Big Cat to verify it. But there was no doubting the evidence of my eyes — there was the fort, and the red coats of its garrison were not to be mistaken. It was some distance below the rapids, on the west bank, just at a point where the river made a short, graceful curve to the east. We approached it without interference, and I had opportunity to examine it closely. It was a regular strong work, the front covered by the river, and mounted with four guns ; the rear having two bastions, furnished with eight pieces of artillery ; the whole surrounded by a wide, deep ditch and an abattis.

“Is Lay-law-she satisfied ?” asked Big Cat, at last.

“Yes,” I answered gloomily, and we set off together up the river to the head of the rapids, where we had left our canoe. There was a trail along the bank, which sloped steeply up from the water to a height of near a hundred feet. Some three miles above the fort, and quite near the river, was a considerable hill, called Presque Isle. Near its foot lay a great rock, covered with rude carving, — a sacred rock, where the Indians brought their offerings to Manito, — and Big Cat stopped to place a bit of tobacco upon it. A little farther on, we came to a wide opening in the forest, where a hurricane had cut its way many years before. A chaos of gnarled trunks and branches lay piled together, and about and between them grew a tall, wild grass, which, I thought,

must afford a splendid hiding place for game. A mile more, and we passed Roche de Bout, where a third of the Ottawas lost their lives in a sudden tribal quarrel, and darkness had fallen ere we reached our canoe.

We decided to spend the night there, and Big Cat and I sat long together after our meal of dried corn and jerk. I had much to think of, and I saw that my companion's brain was also busy. The moon rose as we sat there, and lighted up the valley — with its rich bottoms, its endless fields of corn, its countless huts of bark and logs and skins. Here, indeed, was the great centre of Indian life, where it was richest and pleasantest.

"If the men of Lay-law-she's nation cannot defeat the Indians alone," he began at last, "how can they hope to defeat them and their friends, the British, when they go to war together?"

"We have beaten the British once, Big Cat," I answered, "and we can do it again. The Indians were their allies then as now."

He sat for many minutes turning this over and looking at it, I suppose, from every side.

"Has Lay-law-she been happy here?" he asked.

"Why, fairly so, Big Cat," I answered, looking at him in surprise.

"And Big Cat has been his friend?"

"Big Cat has been his father," I said, and meant it.

"Then why should not Lay-law-she take a woman and live here always?"

"Why — why — Big Cat," I stammered, "I

have n't seen any woman around here I'd care to have."

"Not the daughter of Blue Jacket? Lay-law-she looked at her with favor."

The old rascal! It was only a glance, but it had not escaped him.

"Nonsense, my friend!" I protested. "Blue Jacket will want a thousand peltries for his daughter. I have n't one."

"Shall Big Cat ask Blue Jacket?"

"For God's sake, no!" I cried in a panic. "I don't want her, Big Cat."

"Other white men have looked twice at her," he persisted, "and have found her comely."

"No doubt," I assented dryly. "Still, I don't want her, Big Cat."

He stopped to ponder my obstinacy, and then a brilliant thought occurred to him.

"Perhaps Lay-law-she has already entered the lodge of a white maiden," said he, "and offered her the lighted calumet."

"Perhaps," I assented again, beginning to weary somewhat at his insistence.

"But you may never go back to her," he went on. "Even if you do, she may have taken another man. At least, until you do go back, you could take Blue Jacket's daughter."

"Listen to me, Big Cat," I said. "It is not with us as with the Indian. A white man takes one wife, and no more. He looks at no other woman, and he keeps his wife for himself only. He does not lend her to his guests, nor sell her to his

friends, nor trade her for some other woman. He does not make her do all his work for him — he tills his own fields, and hews his own wood, and carries his own burdens. I can't make you understand of course, you look at it in such a different way — but so it is."

He sat gazing out at the woods and the river for some moments.

"It may be," he said at last, "but the white men who come among us do not so. They take our wives, our daughters" —

"I know," I interrupted, "they rob you of your women as well as of your peltries. But they are bad men, Big Cat. At home, for doing that, they would be set in the stocks, or locked in prison, or even hanged, perhaps. If I took Blue Jacket's daughter, I could take no other woman. No — it won't do."

He said no more, but for an hour sat in deep thought. I looked at him more than once and wondered why he had treated me so kindly — for kind he had been in a way which I could, thank God, one day repay. I rather expected him to recur to his marriage project, but he did not, thinking, perhaps, that as time went on I might become more impressed with the charms of the damsel he had selected for me, and for whom, I verily believe, he would have given the peltries asked. Indeed, she was a handsome woman, tall, lithe as a panther, narrow-hipped, with a face alluring as a woman's could be. But for the memory of another locked in my heart, I might easily have

fallen victim to it, and spent the remainder of my days cheerfully in the wilderness. There was that in the life which must appeal to every man — the freedom, the hand-to-hand struggle for existence, the great untrodden stretches of forest — all these awoke an instinct born with the first of all savages, and which the ages cannot quite wear away.

But at last, fresh rumors came from the south of a great host gathering on the Ohio, of a general who drilled his men night and day, of supplies sent forward, of new forts building, — one on the very field where, for two years, seven hundred skeletons had bleached beneath the sun. Spring passed, and summer came, and all along the Maumee the Indians were gathering, fed by the British and armed by them, summoned from the farthest limits of the northwest to meet the invader. At last, early in June, a force of a thousand warriors, eager for blood, led by Little Turtle, started southward to seek the enemy; a month later, the remnant of the force came back, having failed utterly and lost many men in the assault upon Fort Recovery. It was a reverse quite unexpected, and the British had no little trouble to keep their allies in the mood for war. More than one council was held, in which even the redoubtable Little Turtle was openly for peace.

“We have beaten the enemy twice under separate commanders,” he said at one of these councils, referring to Harmar and St. Clair, against both of whom he had led the allies, “but we cannot expect the same good fortune to attend us always.

The Americans are now led by a chief who never sleeps; the night and the day are alike to him, and during all the time he has been marching upon our villages, despite the watchfulness of our young men, we have not once been able to surprise him. Think well of it. There is something that whispers to me it would be well to accept his offers of peace."

But the ever war-thirsty Shawanese and the persuasions of the British overmastered this advice, and everywhere there was preparation for the conflict. Every warrior was needed, and Big Cat donned his feathers and made ready to go with the others. The near prospect of battle aroused the savage in him, and more than once, as he looked at me, I grew uneasy concerning my own fate. But he soon set my fears at rest by dispatching me with three old men and two boys on a candle-hunting expedition to Blanchard's fork. He charged them strictly to kill me should they suspect me of attempting to escape, and warned me to expect no mercy. After my people had been again defeated, he added, I should live with him once more as his son.

We were out nearly two months, during which time I heard not a word concerning the war, nor found any opportunity of escape, so closely did they watch me. August came, and finally, laden with skins and jerk, we returned to the Glaize, not doubting that the campaign was long since ended. The town was deserted, but supposing the people had gone to the rapids to get their presents from

the British, we stored away our meat, and were just getting breakfast, when suddenly down the river came an Indian runner, giving the alarm whoop. We rushed out of the tent, and oh, how my heart leaped as I saw entering the village a company of riflemen in blue!

There was no time to hesitate — I sprang away from my captors and ran zigzag along the river, expecting a bullet every instant. In a moment, the men in front saw me and raised their rifles.

“Don’t shoot!” I cried. “Don’t shoot!” and I held my hands high above my head.

They halted and awaited me, their rifles still presented.

“Damned if it ain’t a white man!” cried one, as I dashed among them. “Who in God’s name are you?”

“Stewart Randolph, taken captive with St. Clair. And you?”

“The vanguard of Wayne’s legion.”

And at the words I broke down utterly. I could only sob and sob like a child, and cling to them and thank God that it was so.

CHAPTER XXIV

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW

I WAS taken back about three miles, and there we found the army advancing cautiously toward the Glaize, in ordered ranks and with a perfect discipline. With the first line was the general and his staff, and they reined in their horses as we approached them.

"A prisoner? Good!" he cried.

"He is a white man who escaped to us, sir," said my conductor. "He says he was taken captive at St. Clair's defeat."

The general was looking down at me with interested face.

"At St. Clair's defeat?" he repeated. "What is your name, sir?"

"Stewart Randolph, sir," I answered. "I was aide on the general's staff."

One of his followers uttered a little cry and threw himself from the saddle.

"Stewart!" he cried, and caught me by the shoulders. "Look at me! Don't you know me?"

I looked at him — at the blue eyes, the delicate face, the mouth with the little twist at one corner.

"Harry!" I cried. "Harry!"

"Dear boy!" and he caught me to him, the

tears streaming down his face. "Why, this is like one risen from the grave! We thought you dead these three years, Stewart! God's mercy!" and he held me off to look at me. "Pardon me, sir," he added to the general. "Don't think me a baby; but we were boys together; 't is like finding my own brother!"

"There, there!" cried the general. "Not a word, Lieutenant Harrison! I appreciate your feelings, sir, and respect them. One question, Mr. Randolph. Are there any Indians at the Glaize?"

"Not one, sir," I answered. "They have all gone down to the rapids, I think."

"Are they for peace or war?"

"For war, sir, — every brave is under arms — under British arms."

"Ay," he said grimly. "I know. And under the walls of a British fort, I hear. I foresee you will be of great service to me, Mr. Randolph. Bring him to quarters this evening, lieutenant. I relieve you from duty until then," and he rode on, leaving us together.

"Dear boy!" said Harry softly, linking his arm in mine. "It is a miracle! Why, do you know, I was sent with the party to bury the dead on St. Clair's field. Such a horrible task it was — only the skeletons were left — and Frederic and I found one which we were certain was yours" —

"Frederic?" I repeated. "He escaped then? Thank God for that."

"And what a fool I am!" cried Harry. "Think-

ing only of myself! Here, orderly, take this horse. Come with me, Stewart — what a fool!”

He led the way rapidly to the left, where we came at last upon a flanking party.

“Where is your captain?” he asked.

“Ahead there, sir,” and we hurried on along the way pointed out to us.

“There he is,” said my companion, and I caught sight of a tall figure breaking its way through the underbrush. I was trembling so that I could scarcely stand, but I ran forward, stumbling, tripping. The figure turned quickly, and I saw one hand drop to a pistol.

“Frederic!” I cried. “Frederic! Frederic!”

His face went white and he stood like a man of marble, as I blundered forward and threw my arms about him, my head on his breast, and I heard a choked, hoarse voice, which was mine yet not like mine, repeating “Brother, brother, brother, brother,” over and over. I felt the great sob that shook him as he lifted my face to his and looked into my eyes, then bent and kissed me with quivering lips, tender as a mother. What he said, I know not, — his first words were frenzied as my own, — and presently Harry came and led me away to the place where the legion was to camp.

“Frederic will be off duty soon,” he said. “Meanwhile, I want to make a white man of you.”

So the tin was untwisted and the scalp lock cut back; I changed my leggings and hunting-shirt for a uniform, and my moccasins for a pair of stout boots. How they galled me at first! And before

I had quite finished Frederic came, and I must sit down between them and tell my story, and they each had one to tell me in return.

It was Frederic who told me of the rout to Fort Jefferson, of the discovery that I was missing, of his attempt to go back after me ; of the storm of wrath that had burst about the general's head because of the defeat — God knows how little responsible he was for it — until his resignation was forced ; of the selection of General Wayne — Mad Anthony — to succeed him. Frederic had at once joined Wayne's Legion, promoted to the rank of captain. He had passed the winter with the troops in camp near Pittsburg, thence back to Fort Washington, where the summer was spent. In the fall the army had moved forward six miles beyond Fort Jefferson, where a fort was built for winter quarters and christened Greenville. Day after day the levies were drilled and exercised with sabre and bayonet, until they formed a compact, well-disciplined army of three thousand men. Clouds of scouts were kept out to prevent the approach of spies, and roads were cut through the forest. The general knew how much depended on success, and would take no chances. He refused to be hurried ; he would not move until the army was shaped exactly to his liking. The last of June, came General Scott into camp with sixteen hundred mounted Kentuckians, apt in frontier warfare. At last the general was satisfied, and the advance was taken up.

“And we have an army,” concluded Frederic,

"not a mob of cowards. The general has spent two years in forging it."

"So you have not been home?" I asked.

He flushed as he met my glance.

"No, I did not dare."

"Not dare?"

"How should they receive me when I had left you dead behind me in the wilderness?"

I understood and put my arm about him.

"Well," I said, "once this campaign is ended, we will go home."

"Yes," he answered simply, but there was a tone in his voice which told how great had been his longing.

"But you have heard from them?"

"Oh, yes — Colonel Stewart writes me. They are well. Father is managing an estate just below Riverview."

I asked no further questions, but I guessed how bitterly he had blamed himself — yes, and how bitterly, perhaps, others had blamed him — and how unjustly.

Harry's story was sooner told. He had begun the study of medicine at Philadelphia, but he had small liking for it, and at the end of a year had progressed so little that his guardian had expostulated with him. Harry replied that he felt it impossible to advance in a profession where his thoughts could not be concentrated, but that in the army he believed he should not disgrace his family. Mr. Morris was horrified at this, and pointed out how little likely it was that one so weak physically

could bear the hardships of such a calling. "My dear Harry," he said, "one night on a battlefield, one forced march, through snow or rain, would be the death of you." But the boy's purpose was not to be turned aside, and he persuaded the president to give him an ensign's commission in the First Artillery, with which, on the news of Harmar's defeat, he at once proceeded to Fort Washington. He reached there just in time to see St. Clair's vanquished army straggle in. General Wayne had appointed him a member of his family, and he had been with the legion from the very first.

"Last December," he went on, "the general sent a force of artillery and infantry to take possession of the ground of the defeat; and Frederic and I went with it. The place was strewn with skeletons, and with one of them, half buried in underbrush by the roadside, some little distance from the field, we found a knife with your initials cut into the hilt. Frederic knew it at once, and not doubting that the body was yours, we buried it separately at the foot of a tree and cut your name and age upon it."

"It was the body of poor Purdy," I said, and told them of my attempt to save his life and of giving him the knife.

"The bodies were buried with military honors," he added, "and we fired three volleys over them with the cannon that had been left upon the field. Then we erected a fortification, and named it Fort Recovery."

It was this, in the latter part of June, that the expedition under Little Turtle had attacked in

vain, as I have already told, and where the Indians had lost so heavily.

“And now,” he concluded, “we must go to the general. He will be awaiting us.”

As we went through the camp, I could not but notice the precautions to guard against surprise. Picket guards had been thrown out on every side and a strong advance and rear guard stationed. The four sub-legions were camped in the form of a great square, with the dragoons at the corners, and a park of artillery opposite headquarters in the centre. This, so Harry told me, was the order of camp every day. Small wonder the Indians had not been able to surprise it; here, indeed, was a general who never slept!

We found him in his tent, busy with orders for the fort, which he intended to erect at once at the extreme point between the rivers.

“I have been expecting you, gentlemen,” he said, as we entered. “I will be through this business in a moment.”

He turned away to give some final orders and I had a chance to look at him unobserved. I had heard often of Mad Anthony—the hero of Monmouth, of Stony Point, of Green Springs, and of a hundred other fields—and of the gallantry, dash, and headlong courage which had won for him the fond nickname. I saw a man of nearly sixty, a little above the medium height, and dressed with a care unique on the frontier. His face, lighted by a pair of the fieriest hazel eyes I ever looked into, was singularly attractive, with its high forehead,

arched nose, and mouth sweet and firm ; and I saw in an instant that here was a man to love as well as honor.

The last orderly hurried away and he turned back to us.

“ And now, Lieutenant Randolph,” he said, “ sit down and let us have your story.”

He laughed as he saw my look of surprise, and picked up a paper from his desk.

“ I have made out your appointment here,” he said, and tossed it to me. “ As I have said already, you will be of great use to me.”

I grew red with pleasure and started to stammer my thanks, but he stopped me with a gesture.

“ No, no,” he protested ; “ let us have the story.”

So I told it again as briefly as I could.

“ And they are awaiting us at the rapids ? ”

“ I believe so, sir.”

“ My scouts believe so too. You think them bent on war ? ”

“ I am sure of it, sir. The British ” —

“ Yes, I know. Well, they shall have war ! ” and he brought his fist down on the table with a crash. “ Yes, and by God, the British, too, if they attempt to interfere ! ”

There was no mistaking the earnestness of those gleaming eyes.

“ We would have surprised them here,” he added more calmly, “ but that a scoundrelly spy who had got into Ford’s company escaped to them with news of our approach. So they scurried away to the shelter of that fort the British have

put up. But no matter — How many warriors do you think they muster ? ”

“ At least two thousand, sir,” I answered. “ The whole northwest is there.”

“ So much the better,” he said grimly. “ We will teach them a lesson they will never forget. You know the rapids, do you not ? ”

“ Yes, sir. I was over the ground not three months since,” and I described it to him as well as I was able.

“ I attach you to my staff, sir,” he said when I had finished. “ I shall want you near me on the day of battle.”

He dismissed us with that, and we left the tent to find that the new fort, which was to be named Defiance, was already under way, and in the week that followed it was made into a strong defense. It was square, with a block-house at each angle, connected by a line of pickets. Around the whole was a glacis, a wall of earth eight feet thick, sloping upwards and outwards. Outside of this was dug a ditch fifteen feet wide and eight feet deep, surrounding the whole work, except on the side of the Auglaize, and another ditch was dug to the river, so that water might be brought without exposing the carriers to the enemy’s fire. There were gates at north and south, reached by draw-bridges which spanned the ditch. No force the Indians could muster would ever put this stronghold in danger.

At the end of a week it was so nearly done that the advance was ordered, and three days later we

reached the head of the rapids. Here a message from the Indians asked for ten days' truce, but the general would hear of no delay, and prepared to move forward at once. It was certain that the savages were awaiting us near the British fort a few miles below, and we paused to strip for battle. I had only one cause of uneasiness — the general had been seized by an attack of gout, but was fighting against it stubbornly. Could he keep in the saddle all would be well; but without him . . .

He gave no sign of flagging energies. On the nineteenth day of August, works were thrown up near Roche de Bout to secure our heavy baggage, and named appropriately Fort Deposit. At noon, the general issued orders that the legion would march against the enemy at dawn.

CHAPTER XXV

BATTLE

THE camp was astir at dawn, and the scouts came in with the news that the enemy was awaiting us behind that natural abattis of fallen trees which I had remarked three months before, and thought such an excellent hiding-place. They had chosen their ground with care, and it was evident that it would take no little resolution to rout them out of it, since every advantage would be upon their side.

Breakfast was soon over, and the army, eager for the battle, was put under arms. The general, still suffering from gout and swathed in flannel, came out of his tent and mounted his horse. We swung to saddle behind him and followed him as he rode up and down the lines for a last look at the men. They cheered him from end to end and back again, and I could not but contrast them to that other force with which I had gone to battle once before. Here was an army — a unit — sure of success, relying upon their commander, going eagerly to challenge death.

He summoned his officers to him, and spoke to them a few ringing words that brought the color to their cheeks.

“Remember,” he said, “that the fate of all the western country depends upon us this day. If we win, the whole northwest is ours. If we lose, hell itself will break loose upon our settlements. But we cannot lose, so we keep our heads cool. It may be,” he added, with a little smile, recalling other fields, perhaps, “that I may become so involved in the battle that you cannot find me at every moment, but you are to remember that the standing order for the day is ‘Charge the damned scoundrels with the bayonet!’ That will do, sirs — I rely on you.”

They saluted, and hurried back to their commands. The general’s eyes were shining as he stopped for a last look at his army. He had formed the legion on the right, covered by the Maumee; one brigade of volunteers was on his left, under General Todd, and the other in the rear, under General Barbee. For the post of danger in front, a select battalion of volunteers under Major Price had been chosen. They were to draw the fire of the enemy, and had been instructed to keep well advanced, so that the troops would have ample time to form in case of action — for the general still hoped that his overtures of peace would be accepted.

“If they choose war,” he said at last, “it will not be we who regret it. Sound the advance, lieutenant.”

Harry raised his hand, and in a moment the bugles rang out and we were off, slowly, steadily, never for a moment losing our formation, hugging

the river that our right might run no risk of being flanked. A mile was covered, two miles, three, and still no sign of the enemy. The general turned in his saddle and beckoned me to him.

"How far are we from the place called 'fallen timbers'?" he asked.

"Not more than a mile, sir," I answered.

"And we are advancing straight for it?"

"Quite straight, sir. We need only keep on along the river."

"Good!" and he turned again to the contemplation of the ground before him. Another mile we went through a fair open wood, and still not a shot — only a brooding stillness, broken by the tramp of men and the rattle of accoutrements. The strain was beginning to tell, and I fancied that the advance was a shade less steady. Far ahead I could see the tangle of high grass and underbrush I so well remembered.

"There is the fallen timbers, sir!" I cried, and the next instant a sheet of flame leaped out along our front, a rattle of musket fire ran from right to left away into the forest, and I saw Major Price's corps come scampering back in confusion. My heart stood still: was history to repeat itself? But not for an instant did the general lose his head.

With a rush the legion was formed into a double line, and the first advanced steadily against the enemy, firing as it went. But they stopped after a moment; the fire from the grass grew ever hotter and hotter, and it was evident the Indians were pushing in our left flank.

“Captain Lewis,” cried the general, “tell General Scott to take the whole of the mounted volunteers and turn the right flank of the savages,” and Lewis was off among the trees in an instant, to carry the good news to that tried old Indian fighter. “Captain Butts, order Captain Campbell to advance with his whole force and turn the left flank,” and Butts spurred away toward the river. “Lieutenant Harrison, order the first line to advance at the double, with trailed arms, and rouse the Indians with the bayonet point,” and Harry was away toward the front like the wind. The orders had been delivered in a breath — then, with a new thought, the general turned to me. “The front line is to press the savages so they cannot reload ; let there be no hanging back,” and as I put spur to flank, blessing my luck, he turned to hurry up the second line.

I had almost been too late, for even as I reached it, the line sprang up with a cheer and charged with bayonets set. I saw Harry in front with half a dozen other officers, and tried to reach his side, but could not. The next instant there came a blaze of fire in front, the line wavered for an instant, and then kept on. Now I was up with them, and just ahead, through the smoke, I could see the Indians swarming from their ambush.

“Fire !” I screamed. “Fire !”

It needed no command of mine. Each man seemed to know just what to do, and the fire ran down the line ; then forward again, over the confused trunks, through the tangled branches and

tall grass. There was no chance for a horse, so I leaped from the saddle and sprang after them. Ahead I saw Harry, also afoot, still leading the line. I set my teeth and ran toward him as fast as my legs would carry me. He turned as I came pounding up, and smiled at me with flashing eyes.

"Glorious!" he cried. "Glorious!"

"We are to keep up the pursuit," I panted.

He nodded.

"They know it," he said, and glanced behind him to make sure the men were following. We had begun to come upon the Indian dead, and ahead through the jungle I caught a glimpse now and then of a wounded man hobbling along painfully. We came up with them one by one, and they got short shrift, for there was no thought of taking prisoners, nor, indeed, would they, fighting to the last, permit themselves to be taken. Two miles or more we drove them, and at last we came to the edge of the wood and saw the walls of the British fort before us. The savages were thronged about it, apparently relying upon its protection.

"What now?" I asked. "Shall we march against the fort?"

Harry stopped, perplexed.

"Here come the other officers," he said. "They must decide."

Right and left from where they had led the line they hurried together; but the decision did not lie with us, for suddenly along the river to the right the legion's cavalry spurred, rank on rank.

Plainly they had their orders, for never faltering or drawing rein, on they went toward the fort. For a moment I held my breath as I waited for the guns to thunder out. But they stayed dark and silent, while the savages, after hammering vainly at the gates, fled away toward the woods beyond, in a desperate effort to escape. Under the very guns of the fort the cavalry spurred after them, riding them down, cutting them to pieces ; and still the British made no sign. Yes, and from that moment their power with the Indians was gone forever ; for the latter knew, as they had never known before, how empty were the promises of aid and protection which had been so freely given.

“God !” said Harry, drawing a deep breath, “what a sight !”

But my eyes were caught by another spectacle. From the woods at our left an Indian was stumbling, as though wounded, routed out by the second line, just coming up. He stopped as he saw the cavalry ahead of him, then turned and doubled toward us. Half a dozen muskets leaped to shoulder, but I was before them and sprang toward the fugitive with open arms. He stopped as he saw me coming, and raised his hatchet.

“Big Cat !” I cried. “Big Cat, it is I, Lay-law-she. Surrender to me ! You must ! You cannot escape !”

He glanced past me to the troops who were pouring after, then flung his hatchet far away, and awaited me with folded arms.

“He is my captive !” I cried, as they swarmed

about us. "My captive!" and I threw myself before him. "Harry, help me — this is Big Cat, my friend!"

"They shan't harm him!" he cried, his eyes blazing. "Let any of them touch him! Let any of them dare touch him!"

They fell back at the sight of him standing there, sword in hand. I heard the clatter of hoofs and a sharp voice asking the cause of the disturbance.

"Stewart here has taken captive the Indian who befriended him," cried Harry. "We are trying to save him from these madmen, sir."

The general, for it was he, leaned from the saddle and looked down at us.

"And saved he shall be!" he cried. "Captain Smith, detach a guard of twenty men and take him to the rear. You shall answer to me for his safety."

"Very well, sir," said the captain, and in a moment, to my great relief, Big Cat was marched away in the midst of his guards.

"A glorious day, gentlemen," went on the general, as we gathered about. "The greatest defeat, I think, the savages have ever had — it could not have been completer — and not half our force engaged. Neither the second line nor the volunteers got a smell of the action."

I felt a hand in mine and turned to find Fred-eric standing there. He had been with the line away to the left and quite out of sight.

"Not wounded?" he asked.

"Not a scratch. And you?"

"Only a scratch," and he showed me where a ball had stripped the flesh from the side of his left hand.

It was an ugly wound, and Harry saw it, too, as he held it up.

"Let me attend to it, Frederic," he said quickly. "I almost became a surgeon, you know, and am anxious to make use of the little knowledge I have of the art," and he bandaged the hurt with deft fingers, while Frederic watched him with a little quizzical smile.

"I don't think it will kill me," he laughed. "Luckily, 't was not my sword hand."

The cavalry was called back from the pursuit, and we were sent to order up the camp-guard with the tents, for the general had determined to pitch camp at the edge of the wood, within plain sight of the British fort and not above half a mile from it. Everywhere about us were the Indian dead, and more than one white man we saw, too, Canadian militia, as we learned afterwards — Indians and whites alike armed with British muskets.

In Harry's tent we found Big Cat sitting, with the guard still about him. We dismissed the guard, giving Captain Smith, who was in no mind to risk the general's displeasure, a receipt for the prisoner. Then we turned our attention to his wound. It was not a severe one, a ball having passed through the fleshy part of his thigh, and he evidently regarded it as of no moment, though Harry insisted upon dressing it.

"I don't believe it will give him much trouble," he said, when he had finished. "What are we going to do with him?"

"I should like to let him go," I said. "Do you suppose the general would consent?"

"I can soon find out," said Harry, and off he went, eager, as always, to do a generous action. He was soon back. "The general says we may release him," he reported, "if we choose."

"Big Cat," I said in the Delaware, "our General who never sleeps tells us that we may release you — that you may go back, unharmed, to your own people. Will you go now?"

"Yes," he said, and rose to his feet. He stood with folded arms for a moment and looked at me. "And Lay-law-she?" he asked at last.

"Lay-law-she must stay here with his people," I answered.

"You have lived long with me," he said. "We have hunted together and fished together. You called me once your second father."

"And so you have been, Big Cat."

"So I tried to be — I tried to get you a woman, but you would not have her. I am sorry, for then your heart might have been with us. Now it is with your kin across the Big River and the mountains."

"Yes," I said, "it is with them, Big Cat," and my eyes grew wet as I looked at him and thought of our life together.

"It is well," he said. "But — I have no son — I had learned to lean on you as on a staff — I had

hoped to do so in my old age — now the staff is broken ! ”

I could find no word of answer. The wilderness was calling me — the wild life, the free life ! Had a wife been calling, too, I know not how I should have answered. But Harry took my hand in his and drew me to him, and together we watched my second father as he walked slowly away and disappeared in the forest.

CHAPTER XXVI

AN EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES

THERE was work to be done — work hateful enough to most of us, and to none more so than the general, but imperative by the nature of frontier warfare and the character of our foes, who judged mercy to be always cowardice — broad fields of corn to be destroyed, houses to be burnt, whole villages laid waste. The Indians must be taught a bitter lesson that they could never forget — taught to fear the iron hand of the United States, and, more important still, that an alliance with the British could not save them. So we went forth with torch and axe and knife. And first of all, we set in flames the storehouse of McKee, the Indian agent, who had done so much to bring this war about. He could gnaw his nails now, as he watched it from the walls of the fort — yes, and saw the houses of the other traders turn to ashes with it. Then across the river we went, in a fleet of Indian boats, and when night fell, the cabins there were blazing redly against the heavens.

At dawn, the work commenced again, Frederic, Harry, and I being detached together by the general's thoughtfulness. We were watching the men

at work on the last of the cabins along the river, when Harry looked around with a little exclamation.

"See there," he said, and pointed back toward the fort.

The gate had been opened and through it came a man in British uniform — an officer by the lace and sword — bearing a white flag.

"A flag of truce," said Frederic, and we waited where we were as he walked steadily toward us, stopping only when he was within easy speaking distance.

"I bear a message for General Wayne," he said.

"We will take you to headquarters," said Harry, judging that no harm could come from an enemy's inspection of our ordered camp, and at the word, the messenger fell in behind us. It was a short walk, and we found the general in his tent, still suffering with the gout, and in no cheerful humor. "A flag from the British, sir," said Harry, and introduced the messenger.

The general tore open the note with nervous fingers and I saw a cloud gather on his brow as he read it.

"I shall send your commander an immediate answer, sir," he said to the messenger. "Conduct him back through the lines, Lieutenant Harrison. Captain Rohlman and Lieutenant Randolph will remain here."

He read the message through a second time more carefully after they had gone, and his eyes

were gleaming as I had seen them the hour before the battle.

“This is insufferable impudence,” he snorted. “You shall judge, gentlemen. Listen.” And he read the message, a copy of which I have before me now : —

MIAMIS RIVER, August 21, 1794.

SIR, — An army of the United States of America, said to be under your command, having taken posts on the banks of the Miamis, for upwards of the last twenty-four hours, almost within reach of the guns of this fort, being a post belonging to His Majesty the King of Great Britain, occupied by His Majesty’s troops, and which I have the honor to command, it becomes me to inform myself as speedily as possible, in what light I am to view your making such near approaches to this garrison.

I have no hesitation on my part to say that I know of no war existing between Great Britain and America.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

WILLIAM CAMPBELL,

*Major 24th Regiment, commanding
a British Post on the Banks of the
Miamis.*

TO MAJOR GENERAL WAYNE, etc., etc.

“A British post!” the general repeated. “What think you of that? A British post, on United States soil! There are pen and paper, lieutenant. Will you write for me? My hand is

so drawn with this cursed gout I cannot hold a pen."

I sat down at the table and wrote to his dictation : —

CAMP ON THE BANKS OF THE MIAMIS

August 21, 1794.

SIR, — I have received your letter of this date, requiring from me the motives which have moved the army under my command to the position they at present occupy, far within the acknowledged jurisdiction of the United States of America.

Without questioning the authority or propriety, sir, of your interrogatory, I think I may, without breach of decorum, observe to you that were you entitled to an answer, the most full and satisfactory one was announced to you from the muzzles of my small arms yesterday morning in the action against hordes of savages in the vicinity of your fort, which terminated gloriously to the American arms. But had it continued until the Indians, etc., were driven under the influence of the post and guns you mention, they would not have much impeded the progress of the victorious army under my command ; as no such post was established at the commencement of the present war between the Indians and the United States.

I have the honor to be sir, etc.

"Let me have it," he said, and read it over. "That will do very well, I think — 't will certainly leave no doubt of my meaning. That hint that we routed other than Indians in the battle is to

the point. Now hold the pen in my hand, sir," and he signed it, —

ANTHONY WAYNE,
*Major-General and Commander-in-Chief
of the Federal Army.*

"Address it to Campbell," he said. "Now seal it. There. I wish you two gentlemen to be my envoys. Deliver the note only to the commandant."

We went out with it, I, at least, in a very fever of excitement; for I did not doubt that the British commander would take up this challenge. Some wind of the matter had got through the camp, and the men crowded about us, cheering, eager to be sent even against the guns of the fort. When we had passed the lines, Frederic tied his handkerchief to his sword, and with it over his shoulder, we advanced to the fort. They were evidently expecting us, for a wicket in the gate was pushed back as we approached, and a face within demanded our business.

"We have a message for the commandant," I said, "from General Wayne."

"Very well, pass it up," and the sentry held out his hand.

"We will deliver it only to the commandant — such were our instructions."

He held a hasty consultation with some one within.

"You may enter the fort only with bandaged eyes," he said after a moment.

“Then we will not enter at all!” cried Frederic, and turned on his heel, I with him.

“Wait a minute!” called the sentinel after us. “Don’t be so cursed hasty. I’ll send word to the commandant that you are here.”

“Very well,” said Frederic. “You would have saved time by doing that in the first place.”

The sentry slammed the wicket shut, and we heard him walk quickly away. After some moments there came a great lifting of bars, and the gate swung open. A file of soldiers stood within.

“Enter,” said their officer, and they closed about us so soon as we were through the gate, shutting off view of the fort’s interior almost as completely as though we had been blindfolded. They led us to a bastion at one corner, in the lower room of which Major Campbell was sitting, with three or four other officers about him.

“Well, gentlemen?” he began.

“A note from General Wayne for you, sir,” I said, and handed it to him.

He tore it open, and the hot blood mounted to his cheeks as he read it.

“In God’s name!” he cried. “What think you of this, Major Lee?”

Lee held out his hand to take the note.

I saw Frederic start, and examine him with blazing eyes.

Lee flushed as Campbell had when he read the general’s message.

“The impudent beggars!” he cried. “If you ask my advice, major, I would say shoot them down the minute they come within gun-range!”

Campbell opened his lips to reply, then remembered our presence, and shut them again.

"That will do, gentlemen," he said to us. "I shall answer this insult as it deserves."

But Frederic stepped forward toward the other man with a face whose set whiteness startled me.

"I believe you were addressed as Major Lee?" he asked in a voice he tried in vain to steady.

The other looked at him in astonishment.

"Yes; what of it?" he snapped.

"You were, I believe, in Charleston at the time of its capture by the British?"

"Yes," he answered; "and again what of it?"

"There is this of it," said Frederic, still in the same low voice trembling with emotion "I, here and now, in the presence of these gentlemen, brand you as a liar, a coward, and a murderer — a thing unfit to be called a man!"

There was a moment's ominous and astounded silence, then Lee got slowly to his feet.

"I do not know you, sir," he said, "nor do I wish to know you; but you are, of course, aware that words such as these must be answered for."

"I am quite aware of it," said Frederic, his eyes blazing in triumph. "Lieutenant Randolph, will you act as my second?"

I had been so dazed with the suddenness of it all that I but this instant found my tongue.

"My dear Frederic," I began.

"Will you act as my second?" he demanded, again, with a fiercer gleam in his eyes than I had ever seen him turn on me.

"Certainly," I said. "Who else but I?"

But Major Campbell had also found his tongue.

"Damn my soul!" he roared. "What do you mean, sir, by coming here to insult my officers?"

"I mean merely," answered Frederic quietly, "that I seek the opportunity of crossing swords with one of them."

"Well, you have chosen the wrong one!" cried Campbell with a laugh. "Take my advice and apologize, my young cockerel, or your crowing will soon be over. I'll countenance no such slaughter."

Frederic's eyes were blazing again, and quick as a flash he stepped up to Lee and struck him fairly with his open hand across the mouth.

"Will you now?" he demanded.

I thought for a breath that the battle would be fought out then and there, for Lee, with a cry of rage, whipped out his sword. But some one struck it up, and in an instant Campbell had sprung between the two.

"On your own head, you fool!" he cried to Frederic. "Major Lee has my full permission to avenge this insult. There will be, at least, one impudent American the less!"

Frederic turned away to the corner without answering, and it took me but a moment to arrange the details with a Captain Foulke, whom Lee named to represent him. The meeting, it was agreed, should take place at sunrise at a level spot near the river just below the fort. Swords were to be the weapons, and the combat was to be

à l'outrance. This was the only stipulation Fred-eric made, and Lee agreed to it at once.

It was not until we were in the open air with our lines before us that I found time to be astonished; and then, when I would have spoken, there was such a light of joy and triumph on my companion's face that my words of question and protest died unuttered on my lips — such a light of joy and triumph as I had never seen. He seemed transfigured; outside the world, not heeding it. So, in silence, we came to the general's tent, and I made report of the result of our embassy.

The general turned purple ere I had got midway.

“Shoot us down, will they?” he shouted. “By Heaven, we'll see! Help me on with my frock, gentlemen. Bring our horses, there!”

He was out of his tent like a whirlwind, his illness quite forgotten. A troop of dragoons was ordered out, and we mounted and clattered away after him. When we came out into the clearing about the fort, he wheeled us into line, and we trotted forward to within a hundred yards of it. Within we could hear the drums beating; the red coats of the gunners gleamed behind their pieces; here and there torches sprang alight.

“My staff will follow me,” called the general, and cantered his horse on toward the nearest bastion, Harry, Butts, and I behind him. Yard after yard we went until forty had been covered. Then he stopped, and coolly surveyed the fortress just ahead.

I confess that what I saw there did not tend to

make my seat in the saddle any easier. The cannon had been brought to a recover, and over them leaned the gunners, torch in hand, ready to fire. The guns loomed dark and threatening, and at any instant, I thought, might burst forth with flame. It was Harry who dared to interfere.

"You are risking certain death here, sir," he protested, but the general smiled and shook his head.

"They dare not fire," he said.

We heard the clatter of hoofs behind us, and in a moment General Wilkinson and his staff rattled up at a hand-gallop.

"What are you doing here, sir?" he cried in deep concern for the general's safety.

"Making the British eat their words," retorted the latter dryly; and indeed it was true, for two officers suddenly appeared on the bastion and caught away the torches from the gunners. "You see, we are quite safe," he added, "and may examine the fort at our leisure." He sat for some moments looking at it, then turned his horse, and rode slowly away.

This demonstration drew a vigorous protest from Major Campbell, who claimed that we had insulted the British flag. The general replied with a peppery note, requiring the instant withdrawal of the British from territory belonging to the United States, and had the fort thoroughly examined. But we found no cause to assault it, for the garrison made no offensive movement, even though the general ordered everything burnt and destroyed

right up to the muzzles of the cannon ; nor was the general himself prepared to enforce his demand for their withdrawal, since we had no heavy guns, and an attempt to storm would have meant the loss of many lives.

When we got back to headquarters after this demonstration, we found Frederic awaiting us there, and he asked the general for a word in private.

“ I should like my two friends for witnesses,” he added. The general assented, evidently wondering at the seriousness of his tone, and Harry and I followed them into the tent.

“ I believe, sir, that we have accomplished the great purpose of this expedition,” began Frederic.

“ Why, yes,” said the general ; “ we have defeated the Indians.”

“ I take it then, sir, that a man may resign from the service without disgrace ? ”

“ Why, yes ; I suppose so.”

“ Then, sir, I wish to tender you my resignation, to take effect at once.”

We were staring at him in astonishment, but the general soon got his breath.

“ What is the meaning of this — ha ! — extraordinary action, sir ? ” he demanded. “ I must have a reason — and a mighty good one, sir ! ”

“ The reason, sir, is that I am to meet Major Lee, of the British army, at sunrise to-morrow.”

The general fell back in his chair and glared at him with open mouth.

“ A duel ? ” he cried.

“A duel, sir ; *à l'outrance*.”

“Why, damn it, sir, when could a challenge pass ?”

“It passed at the fort, sir ; Lieutenant Randolph acted for me, at my request.”

“And who was the aggressor ?”

“I was, sir ; Major Lee has done me a deadly wrong which demands this satisfaction.”

“But, sir,” roared the general, “you have violated one of the laws of war ! I send two envoys to the enemy and they take advantage of it to issue a challenge ! I never knew the like ! In justice, I should order you in irons !”

“I must take my revenge when I can find it,” answered Frederic quietly. “I have waited for it patiently many years. I would rather burn in hell than let this man escape.”

There was a depth of passion in his voice that compelled attention, and the general sat for some moments without speaking, looking at him. Perhaps he saw in his face what I had already seen there — the joy a strong man feels when he has achieved the utmost purpose of his life — perhaps the act appealed to his own great love of gallantry.

“Do not be too certain of success,” he said at last. “What are the weapons ?”

“Swords, sir.”

“These British officers are very devils at fence.”

“I was the pupil for three years, sir, of the best swordsman in Paris — M. le Viscomte de Malartie. In our last bout, I touched him thrice and he got home but once.”

Again the general looked at him, then rose painfully from his chair and hobbled to a corner of the tent. In a moment he was back with a long case in his hands.

“Captain Rohlman,” he said, “I refuse to accept your resignation. As your commander, I know nothing of this meeting. But, confound it, sir, as a soldier and man of honor, I admire you! Here is a pair of small-swords, the finest I ever saw — General Lafayette gave them to me. Take them, sir, with my best wishes!”

CHAPTER XXVII

VENGEANCE

THE mist lay white along the river as Harry, Frederic, and I left our quarters in the early dawn. Harry was to be the other second, and — horrible addition! — his knowledge of surgery might also prove of value. I carried under my arm the case with the general's swords, and I knew that the package in Harry's hand contained lint and bandages which he himself had prepared. We gave the countersign, and the sentry passed us without question, thinking, perhaps, that we were going for an early bath.

The sun had not yet risen and the world lay still and cool in the dim light flushing the eastward sky. Here and there, a bird, just waking, was cheeping sleepily among the trees; silvery cobwebs, wrought in the night, hung across our path, heavy with dew. We turned toward the river bank and struck into the trail that ran along it, past the wood, and so to the clearing about the British fort. Just beyond it, not twenty feet from the water, lay a level meadow, some hundred yards across, and to this I led the way.

“This is the place,” I said.

“A splendid ground,” said Frederic, and went

carefully over it to make sure there was no rock or hidden hole.

We watched him in silence. To me, at least, this was not the one that I had known and loved, boy and man ; he seemed no longer a poor thing of flesh and blood — rather an irresistible element, which fate itself could not turn aside. More than once, during the previous evening, had I attempted to discuss with him the outcome of the meeting, but each time he had silenced me with the calm assertion that only one outcome was possible. And in the end, I had come to share in some degree this supreme self-confidence.

He came back at last from the circuit of the field, satisfied with his inspection of it, and glanced impatiently toward the fort.

“There comes the sun,” he said.

“And there come the British !” added Harry.
“Prompt to the minute.”

The gate of the fort swung open and three men came through. They saw us in a moment and walked rapidly toward us, their uniforms looking very bright and handsome. At the edge of the meadow, Major Lee stopped, and his seconds came forward alone. I introduced Harry to them and was in turn presented by Captain Foulke to his companion, Captain Radnor.

“The preliminaries need not take us long,” said Foulke, when this ceremony was ended. “You understand, gentlemen, that at the express desire of your principal, the combat is to be *à l’outrance*.”

"Yes," I said. "We understand that."

"We have a pair of swords here which may commend themselves to you," he added, opening a case which he had brought with him.

"We also have a pair," and I handed them to him.

He raised his eyebrows with a little air of astonishment as he examined them.

"Why, these are gems — real gems! Just look at them, Radnor. We may as well put ours away again."

Radnor tested them as his friend had done, and gave a little whistle of enthusiasm.

"Right you are, Foulke," he said. "Shut ours up. This is as fine a pair as ever came out of France."

They measured them point and hilt, — "Right to a hair," said Radnor, — and the case was placed in the middle of the field. Major Lee, doffing frock and waistcoat, walked to the case and picked one up at random, though I could see his start of surprise when he found it was not his. He bent it to left and right, poised it in his hand, and cast a little questioning glance at Frederic.

"We are all ready, I believe, gentlemen," said Foulke, as Frederic, stripped to his shirt, picked up the other sword, and I removed the case.

"I am quite ready," said Major Lee, and took his place.

"And I ask but a moment's patience," said Frederic. "I wish to offer Major Lee a word of explanation."

I saw the faintest shadow of a smile dart across the lips of the seconds, and Lee shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

Frederic's cheeks grew crimson and his eyes blazed, as he saw the gesture.

"You may, perhaps, have wondered, Major Lee," he continued in a voice deep with passion, "why I was so set upon this meeting."

"Not at all," answered Lee insolently. "I have met fools and madmen before this."

"Let me assure you that I am neither," said Frederic more calmly. "This meeting has been the one dream and desire of my life since I was a boy of twelve. Night and morning, every day since then, I have prayed God that He might permit me to stand before you one day sword in hand. That prayer, you see, is granted."

Lee was staring at him with astonished eyes, perhaps thinking him really mad.

"But that was not all the prayer — I asked, too, that I might be permitted to kill you, and I am quite sure that will be granted also."

Lee shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of disdain.

"I put my faith in skill and strength of wrist, sir," he said. "You are quite welcome to your prayers."

"Nevertheless," persisted Frederic, "I wish you to know to whom the end is due. My revenge were incomplete without it. My name, doubtless, recalled no memory to you?"

"In faith, no," sneered Lee. "I made no in-

quiries about your name — it may have been repeated to me, but I did not heed it.”

“It may have repaid you to heed it, sir,” and Frederic’s voice began to tremble under the insults of the other. “It is Frederic Rohlman, and I am the son of that Gerhart Rohlman who was hanged one morning many years ago, on a prison ship in Charleston harbor, having been betrayed by the man he had befriended — who, I repeat, is a liar, coward, and murderer! His name, at that time, was Jonas Morgan; it seems he has changed it since.”

Lee took the blow fairly in the face, and took it well.

“I am ready to answer with my sword for any deed of mine,” he said, evenly and calmly. “But I have no wish to kill you, sir, as I shall inevitably do if you persist in this folly. A word of apology and I release you. Remember, all is fair in war.”

“I am ready, sir,” was Frederic’s only answer, and he stood on guard.

From the first instant of the combat, it was evident that Lee had good reason for his confidence. Not even in Malartie’s hand could that perfect blade have been more light, more swift, more subtle. Thinking, doubtless, to end it in a moment, he made a terrific assault, which Frederic, unsteadied by his emotion, was unable to withstand. He gave back a step, and I saw a line of blood spring across his shirt, low on the left side. Foulke saw it, too, and in an instant had struck up the swords and exchanged a word with his principal.

“Major Lee instructs me to say, sir,” he began, “that he is quite satisfied, and trusts that you will see the wisdom of not pressing the combat further.”

“But I am not satisfied!” cried Frederic. “I do insist. Go back, sirs!” he added to Harry and me. “This is but a scratch — but a graze on the skin!” and he pulled his belt more tightly about him.

“As you will,” said Foulke. “But I warn you, sir, that this offer of mercy will not be repeated.”

“I am sure of it,” said Frederic, in a voice full of meaning, and saluted his antagonist.

Lee tried again the tactics of his first attack — the furious assault, the feint in *tierce*, the lightning thrust in *flanconade* — but Frederic’s blade seemed a veritable wall of steel before him, and in the end it was Lee who broke. And now it was Frederic’s turn — he gave the other no chance for a breathing spell, but was upon him in an instant — *une, deux, trois*. Malartie had taught him well, but Lee’s blade found his always by a kind of marvelous instinct and turned it harmlessly aside. The honors, this far, were plainly with the Englishman, but Frederic had one great advantage which no skill or training could outweigh — he had youth and health and twenty years of righteous living behind him, while Lee — was a man of the world. So I saw that soon his face was growing purple, his breath irregular. Youth and strength were telling, as they always must. Lee

saw this and tried to save himself by playing carefully, by assuming only the defensive, but Frederic seemed a man of steel, tireless, certain. To such a contest there could be but one conclusion, and it came soon and swiftly. For the merest fraction of a second, Lee's point, thrown aside by a vigorous parade, left his breast uncovered, and Frederic, with a full *longe*, sent his blade home. Lee stood for an instant motionless, tense, with staring eyes; then raising himself on tiptoe in a convulsive and desperate effort to keep his feet, dropped his sword and fell forward, coughing, upon his face.

"So is God justified!" said Frederic, and throwing his sword from him, stood looking down upon the prostrate man.

They turned him over hastily to find his eyes set and his lips flecked with blood.

"He still breathes," said Foulke, noting a convulsive movement of the chest. "Come, we must hurry him to the fort, Radnor. My compliments, sir," he added to Frederic. "You are a clever swordsman. Perhaps you will honor me with a meeting?"

"You nor no man, sir!" cried Frederic. "I have fought my fight."

They looked at him for a moment curiously, then took their friend up carefully and bore him away toward the fort. We stood watching them until the gate shut behind them.

"And now, Harry," said Frederic, "I think I shall ask you to look at this scratch of mine."

I was wiping the swords and putting them back into the case, but the hoarseness of his tone brought me to my feet.

"Frederic!" I cried, springing toward him. He stood for an instant with set lips and eyes still smiling, then swayed gently forward toward me and sank into my arms.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WE START ON A LONG JOURNEY

A SCRATCH, indeed! The sword had pierced his side just above the bone of the hip, and had gone clear through. He had pulled his belt tight over the wound and so stopped somewhat the flow of blood, but in the last moments of the combat it had broken out afresh and shirt and small-clothes were soaked with it. Thank Heaven, Harry kept his head better than I, or Frederic might have bled to death lying there, from sheer lack of aid. He tore away the clothing; sent me to the river for water, which I brought in my hat for want of something better; washed the wound carefully and tenderly, stopped it with lint, and tied a bandage tightly about it with an admirable deftness.

"There," he said at last, with a sigh of relief. "I think that will do until some better surgeon can attend him. I never thought my little knowledge of the art would be so useful."

I brought more water and Harry bathed the still face until the eyes opened and looked up at us, blankly at first, then with remembrance of time and place.

"Is it very bad?" he asked.

"Why, no," answered Harry with a cheerful-

ness I was far from feeling. "Only a flesh wound which will lay you up for a few days, until it closes and you get your strength again. You fainted from loss of blood, that is all. You would have been all right had you permitted us to attend to it at once."

"I feared you would take my sword from me," said Frederic with a smile. "I could run no chance of that, you know. Now we must get back to camp."

"Yes," assented Harry, "but you are not going to walk a step of the way, sir. Stewart, if you would bring a litter" —

"Nonsense!" protested Frederic, "and have this affair noised all through the camp! I won't have it!" and he tried to rise.

"Don't do that," pleaded Harry, holding him down. "You'll open the wound again. Only be still and I'll find some other way."

Frederic lay back obediently enough, doubtless finding himself weaker than he had thought, while Harry sat with knitted brows looking at him. I looked at him, too, but without the power of connected thought.

"I have it," said Harry at last. "We must take a little risk, but not much. Stewart, go up to the landing and bring down a boat — one with a broad seat."

I hurried away, without pausing to question him, and soon ran the boat up on the bank opposite them.

"Now," said Harry, "we must get him into it."

Put your arm under his shoulders — so. Now lift him up — carefully.”

He had his arms about him also, and between us we got him to his feet. Frederic was smiling at our concern for him and protested that he was quite able to walk to the boat without assistance.

“Yes, and bleed to death after you get there,” retorted Harry. “No, no, my boy — not a bit of it.”

We got him settled in the seat at last, with Harry beside him with an arm about him. I shoved off, took the oars, and rowed slowly up the river.

“This will take us quite near the camp,” said Harry. “And we must trust him to walk the rest of the way without injury. I will help you on with your frock, Frederic, so that all this blood will not show.”

The half mile was soon covered, and we found the camp astir from end to end as we came opposite it. Already a party had started out to complete the destruction begun the day before. The sentry let us pass without question, only looking curiously at Frederic’s pale face and doubtless drawing his own conclusions from it. But we made our way to our tent without further encounter, and soon had Frederic stripped, bathed, and clothed anew, and snugly at rest on a cot.

“You would better go report to the general, Stewart,” said Harry, and off I went, taking the case of swords with me.

The general glanced up quickly as I entered.

Something in my face seemed to reassure him, and he motioned me to wait while he concluded some instructions he was giving Captain Butts. When we were alone together, he wheeled sharply round upon me.

"Well?" he asked.

"Both swords found a sheath, sir," I said, "only the one that Frederic held found the deeper one."

"Tell me about it," he commanded. "No evasions."

So I told him as clearly and simply as I could, not omitting the cause of the quarrel, and he heard me, sitting quite still at his table till I had ended.

"'Twas well done," he said, drawing a deep breath. "I am glad the British should be taught this lesson, since it is not permitted me to teach them a more severe one. They think us boors, you know; and a little taste of good swordsmanship may awaken them somewhat. I shall call upon Captain Rohlman this afternoon," and call he did, speaking some few words to him that made him flush with pleasure.

But neither Harry nor I was permitted to loiter at his bedside, for there was much to do. All up and down the river, houses were burned and great fields of grain destroyed, until, when evening fell, only smoking ruins remained. It was nearly dark when Harry and I, having crossed from the farther shore, ordered the destruction of the last of the boats. That done, we walked slowly back toward the camp, when suddenly from the fort there

came a ruffle of drums followed by a volley of musketry. We stopped short, looking at each other.

“So Frederic is avenged!” said Harry at last, and we went on toward the camp.

Our work at the rapids was done. We had heard nothing from the Indians, and it was evident they had suffered too severely to risk another battle. So, early the next morning, the whole force was paraded and general orders read to take up the line of march back to Camp Deposit; but first we paid the honors of war to the thirty men who had fallen on the field, by a discharge of three rounds from sixteen pieces of ordnance charged with shells. That done, we wheeled into line and started on the backward trail.

Frederic's wound had been re-dressed early in the morning by Doctor Hayward, who found it doing nicely, and who made a place for him in a wagon with some other wounded—we had over a hundred of them to carry back with us. We reached Camp Deposit toward mid-afternoon, and found our heavy baggage undisturbed. By the next day, Frederic was so much improved that he could go on horseback, and so grew stronger every day as we proceeded slowly up the river, burning the houses and destroying the crops as we went, the whole army living royally on the corn, potatoes, beans, and other vegetables taken from the fields. Four days later, in the midst of a heavy rain, we marched again into Fort Defiance, leaving behind us a swath of ruin sixty miles long, including the very flower of the Indian towns.

Here the general decided to remain for some time to refresh the troops, and he set to work at once preparing a report of the campaign for General Knox.

"Why may not Stewart and I carry it to Philadelphia?" asked Frederic, when Harry chanced to mention that evening that the general was at work on the report.

"But, my dear fellow," protested Harry, "you could not bear the journey."

"Nonsense — I am strong as I ever was. Would you like to go, Stewart?"

Would I? He had only to look at me to read his answer.

"But our claims," I objected. "We cannot go back with them in our pockets."

"No," and Frederic's face clouded. "We must do what we came west to do. Well, we shall not have to wait much longer," he added, with a cheerfulness not quite genuine. "This defeat of the Indians must soon open the valley of the Scioto to us."

"Yes," I said, "and I know exactly where the claims must be placed — on the west bank of the river, from five to six miles above the mouth of the Olomon."

"Why," broke in Harry, "if you know that much, the rest is easy enough. Give me your warrants and I will send them to Colonel Anderson, the surveyor of this district, at the Falls of the Ohio. I met him frequently at Fort Washington, and at the home of Judge Symmes, at Cincin-

nati. I am sure he will be glad to attend to the business for you."

"You intend to remain in the west yourself, then, Harry?" I asked.

"Why, yes, for the present," he answered with a little laugh, but I was so occupied with my own affairs that I did not notice his confusion.

So it was decided that he should take charge of our claims, if the general gave us the commission, and together we three waited upon him to prefer the request.

"Certainly," he answered instantly. "You may carry the report — one of the reports, that is. The means of communication are so uncertain that I intend to send two, — one by river, the other through Lexington, and so on by the wilderness road. You may carry the latter, if you wish, though I warn you it is a long and weary journey. Still, the river service is so slow and irregular that you will very likely be the first to Philadelphia with the news."

"Very well, sir, and thank you," said Frederic, and we went back to our tent to make ready for an early start next day. There was not much to do, but we sat late into the night talking over the past and planning for the future.

"I have a note here," said Harry, just before we blew out the candle, "which I wish you to take to Fort Washington for me. It is to Judge Symmes," he added.

"Why, of course," said Frederic, and stowed it away in his wallet, from which our land warrants

had already been transferred to Harry's keeping. "And have you none to send east by us?"

"No," said Harry. "No, I believe not. You can remember me to all who ask news of me. Perhaps you will see my guardian, Mr. Morris, who thinks me quite gone to the dogs."

But there were others in plenty who had missives to send, and by the time we were ready to start, a great parcel of them had collected at headquarters for us. We rolled them in a strip of canvas and packed them away with the remainder of our kit; but the general's letters Frederic placed in his book, which was carried in a pocket in his shirt.

"Good-by and good luck," was the general's parting greeting. "I think you will find your message no unwelcome one," and he gave us each a warm clasp of the hand.

We said good-by to the others, and to Harry last of all; then swung to saddle and started southward on our long journey home.

CHAPTER XXIX

I COME TO PHILADELPHIA

WE went back by quick stages to Fort Washington, along the road beaten to smoothness by the unceasing passage of the transport, stopping at Forts Greenville, Jefferson, and Hamilton, and reaching our destination on the evening of the fourth day, without adventure of any kind. We gave to Major Zeigler, in command of the fort, the duplicate dispatches which were to go to Fort Pitt by river and thence across the mountains. Then we made our way down into the little settlement of Cincinnati, which had sprung up on the river bank just below the fort, and finally found the residence of Judge Symmes. He came to the door himself, and invited us in most cordially when he learned that we bore a note from Lieutenant Harrison. He laughed as he tore it open and saw its contents.

“Three words to me,” he said, “but I’ll warrant there’s more in this enclosure,” and he held up a little missive that had been folded within his own. “Excuse me a moment, gentlemen,” and he went to the door and bade a servant summon his daughter. In a moment there came a swirl of skirts on the stair, and one of the most charming girls I ever saw came into the room with a hop,

skip, to stop abashed when she saw two strangers standing there.

"Never mind, my love," laughed her father. "Gentlemen, this is my daughter, Anna. They are from Wayne's army, my dear, and have brought me a note in which I have found another, from a gentleman you know," and he held it up tantalizingly, high out of her reach.

She crimsoned with surprise and pleasure as she looked at it.

"Now don't be cruel, papa," she pleaded, holding out her hands; and he deposited the note in them on the instant.

"You may run away and read it, my dear," he said. "We will pardon you," and as she curtsied to us and flew up the stair, he turned to us smilingly. "'T will be a hard blow to her mother and me to lose her," he said, "but I know of no one we would give her to more gladly than Lieutenant Harrison. Do you know him well, gentlemen?"

"We were boys together, sir," I replied. "Our home was just above Berkeley on the James."

Nothing would do but that we should tell him something of our life there, and while we were talking, his daughter came shyly in again, bringing her mother with her. All of them insisted that we stay for dinner, and a simple, kindly, generous family we found them. It was my privilege to sit at table beside Miss Anna, and to pour into her ear such stories of her lover as turned her red with pleasure. Lucky dog that he was! What a hunger for woman's presence my three years of exile

had given me, and how I relished that evening with this cultured, witty family! It passed all too quickly, and at last we bade them good-by with genuine regret and made our way back to the fort to be ready for an early start. But early as it was, the judge was at the landing, and went with us on the ferry across the river, to wave us good-by upon its other side, as we rode southward for Lexington.

There is no need that I should detail here that long journey over the wilderness road, by which so many thousands had poured into Kentucky, and which was still the main artery of travel between west and east. It was a good road nearly all the way, — much better, as a whole, than the one to Fort Pitt, — with a passable inn at almost every stage, and we met many people on it hurrying toward the west. We found ourselves welcome messengers indeed. The news we brought of General Wayne's great victory was everywhere received with acclamations, and the colonists pushed forward more zealously than ever toward what most of them regarded as a second Promised Land.

In ten days we reached Laurel River, and so on to Richland Creek and the Cumberland, up which we traveled for about ten miles. Then began the ascent to the gap, not a bad one by any means, nor so steep as the road over Laurel Hill. Beyond it, our way lay in a great valley between the ridges to Powell's Mountain, which the road crossed to get into the next trough to the eastward. The road beyond was bad and hilly, but we pressed forward

to the Clinch, where there was a little settlement and a mill owned by a man named Briley.

The road to the eastward continued very hilly, but we finally won through to Major Campbell's on the Holston River, who assured us that the worst lay behind. The next day we reached Fort Chissel, a rude blockhouse built forty years before, immediately after the capture of Fort Duquesne from the French. Here a road from the south joined the main road, bringing in the immigrants from Richmond and the central portions of Virginia. But we kept to the north road, crossing New River at Inglis's ferry, where there was a large settlement, passing over the divide and down into the Shenandoah valley, the "great wilderness" left behind at last.

Frederic had stood the trip thus far splendidly. He protested every day that his wound troubled him not the slightest, and it was always he who was urging an early start and more rapid progress. He seemed consumed by a very fever of desire to get home, and though he said never a word to me about it, I could guess the reason easily enough. He appeared as strong as I, so I spurred along beside him willingly. But now, as we proceeded, a change came over him — he rode with lips compressed and a line of pain between his eyes. Yet when I questioned him, he laughed at my fears, and declared them wholly groundless. That he was deceiving me, and himself also, perhaps, I know now well enough. It was only his strength of will that held him up, and one evening as we

cantered into Martinsburg, he slipped and fell as he was getting down from the saddle before the inn. I was beside him in an instant, raised him and led him into the house. He smiled at me with pale lips, and I trembled as I felt how weak he was.

"You must get to bed at once," I said. "You are in no shape to travel farther."

He made no protest, and I soon had him safe between the sheets. I left him so, and went to the taproom to get him a bowl of toddy. It took some moments to brew, and when I came back again, he was sitting up in bed, plucking at the cover.

"Here is some toddy, Frederic," I said. "Drink it. It will strengthen you."

He looked at me for a moment with eyes shining strangely.

"But where is Ruth?" he asked. "I heard her voice. Is she not coming?"

It gave me such a shock I came near dropping the dish.

"Heard her voice!" I cried.

"Yes — just a moment since. She was coming up the stair with her father. Is she still angry? Does she still think me a coward? Has n't she forgiven me yet? You must tell her to forgive me, Stewart."

Then I understood. I set down the dish and went to him and took both his hands in mine — they were hot with fever.

"I will — oh, I will!" I cried. "She shall come, Frederic. I promise you. Only lie down now and be quiet."

He obeyed me like a child, talking hoarsely to himself the while, and so soon as I had him settled again, I flew down the stair on feet winged by terror to summon aid. In that hour of trial our host, a little fat man named John Duncan, proved himself a friend indeed. He called a surgeon, who, finding the fever higher and the delirium more violent, at once bled Frederic, and then undid the bandages about his wound. It looked inflamed and swollen, and was bleeding a little, doubtless from the fall. He shook his head over it as he washed it and bound it up again.

“Has he ridden far in this state?” he asked.

“We have come near eight hundred miles,” I answered.

“Eight hundred miles!”

“He would come,” I said. “I could not say him nay. He said he was quite strong.”

“Humph! Well, we will do what we can to repair the damage,” and he went out, leaving me alone with such bitter self-accusing as had never before wrung me. Why had I let him come; why had I let him blind me to his suffering — why . . .

Mrs. Duncan came up presently with a bitter draught, which purged him and broke the fever, but left him weak and white. He dropped asleep at last, and I, sitting over his bed through the night, resolved that if he got no better I would myself set off for Riverview and bring Ruth back with me. Forgive him, indeed! Rather should she go down on her knees and beg forgiveness for ever doubting him!

Morning came and he still slept, but the surgeon said he was better, that the sleep would renew his strength, and they sent me off to bed, unheeding my protests. It was near evening when I awoke, but good news awaited me. He had taken a little food and was asleep again; he was stronger and better in every way; there was nothing I could do. So the night passed, and the day and another night; but the third morning he awoke much stronger and with head quite clear.

"How long have we been here?" was his first question, when he opened his eyes and saw me standing by his bedside.

"This is the third day," I said.

"What folly!" he cried, trying to raise himself, while I held him, imploring him to lie still lest he do himself an injury. "Why did you not take the dispatches and ride on with them, Stewart?"

"Because I think more of you than of a hundred dispatches," I answered hotly. "The dispatches can wait. I'll stay here till you are well."

He looked up at me with anger in his eyes — anger and reproach.

"You will do nothing of the sort," he said sternly. "You will take the dispatches and go on with them at once to Philadelphia, or I myself will do so."

There was nothing for it but to consent, for I verily believe he would have made good the threat and killed himself in doing it. My only satisfaction as I rode slowly on toward the Potomac was that I had left him in good hands, and the surgeon

had assured me that he was well-nigh out of danger and would soon regain his strength.

I crossed the river at Wadkin's ferry, and pushed on as rapidly as my horse could carry me over the mountain at Block's Gap, through Hunterstown, Abbottstown, and Yorktown, to Wright's ferry on the Susquehanna, and so on by the Lancaster road toward Philadelphia. The roads were good, the two days' rest at Martinsburg had put my horse in fair condition, and four days later, just as evening fell, I came to the Schuylkill and saw the lights of the great city gleaming from the other side. I was soon across, and inquired of the first watchman the way to the residence of General Knox.

"An' what might you be wantin' with him?" he asked with a curiosity I thought exceedingly ill-timed.

"I bring him dispatches from the west," I said.

"An' what might be goin' on there?" he persisted.

"General Wayne has won a great victory over the Indians," I answered impatiently. "Will you tell me where General Knox lives, or not?"

"Why, of course I will, young feller," he said. "I'll take you right to the house myself. So th' Indians is beat at last — th' Lord be praised! — th' Lord be praised!"

He set off ahead of me along the street, swinging his lantern, and stopping every now and then to shout the news to some acquaintance or other watchman, who took up the cry and sent it echoing

from block to block across the city. At last we stopped before a small brick house at whose door my guide thundered.

"An express for General Knox!" he announced to the man who opened the door.

"General Knox is at the President's," said the man.

"Then we'll go there," said my guide. "Come along, sir; 't is only a step; just over here on High Street."

There was nothing to do but follow, though the minutes were passing in a way that vexed me.

"That's th' place, sir," announced my guide at last, and pointed ahead to a tall, square, four-storied house, flanked on either side by high walls, and illuminated by two street-lamps. "That's th' President's house."

The upper windows were ablaze with light, and through them I could catch a glimpse of a crowd of gayly dressed people.

"Why, 't is a reception!" I cried, suddenly conscious of my own bedraggled and travel-stained attire. "I can't enter there!"

"Nonsense!" retorted my guide. "One man is as good as another here," and in proof of the assertion, he went up the little flight of steps and wielded the knocker with no light hand. From somewhere near-by there suddenly burst out a great clamor of bells, and I thought I could hear people cheering. Then the door was flung open and a man in a livery of white and scarlet stood on the threshold.

"A messenger with dispatches from General Wayne!" announced my guide, who plainly relished the importance of his mission. "Is General Knox here?"

"He is, sir," responded the other.

"Who wants General Knox?" demanded a voice, and a man in uniform came up behind the servant.

"A messenger from General Wayne, sir," repeated my guide.

I tumbled off my horse and stumbled up the steps. I had not realized how tired and stiff I was. The man at the door caught me by the arm to steady me and looked into my face.

"Defeat or victory?" he asked in a voice scarce above a whisper.

"Victory," I said.

"Glorious! Come with me," and he strode before me down the hall, up a rather narrow stair, and into a room at the left of the passage.

"Why are the bells ringing?" I heard a voice ask, as we entered the room, with the people parting to the left and right. "Has some news arrived?"

"It is here this instant, sir," cried my guide. "A messenger from General Wayne with the welcomest news we have had for many a day!"

He brought me forward, and I found myself looking up into the eyes of the President.

CHAPTER XXX

MEETING

SUCH calm, steadfast eyes they were, blue-gray, looking out from under heavy brows, and shining now with the liveliest satisfaction.

“You bring a message, sir?” he asked.

“I do, sir,” I said with what steadiness I could muster, and brought it forth. “It is addressed to General Knox,” I added.

“I think General Knox will not object to your giving it to me,” he said with a little smile. “It brings good news?”

“Very good, sir.”

“Then it shall be read here,” and he took it from me, tearing off the cover. He glanced at the close writing, and then handed it to a gentleman who stood at his elbow. “Mr. Lear,” he said, “you will have to read it to us — I have grown not only gray, but almost blind, in the service of my country.”

It was said so simply, so sweetly, that I felt a mist before my own eyes, and I am sure there were others in the room not wholly dry. Mr. Lear began the reading, while the guests crowded into the room and about the open door to hear.

HEADQUARTERS, GRAND GLAIZE,
August 28, 1794.

SIR, — It is with infinite pleasure that I now announce to you the brilliant success of the federal army under my command in a general action with the combined forces of the hostile Indians and a considerable number of the volunteers and militia of Detroit on the 20th instant, on the banks of the Miami in the vicinity of the British post and garrison at the foot of the rapids.

He got no farther, for a girl's voice near the door called, "Three cheers for General Wayne!" and they were given with a will, while the President stood with beaming face.

"That is right!" he said. "Thank God, that great load is lifted from us. But, pardon me, Mr. Lear; what is the date of that dispatch? I did not catch it."

"The twenty-eighth of August, sir."

"And this is the third of October. You have done well, sir," he added to me. "By which route did you come?"

"By the wilderness road, sir."

"And alone?"

"I had a companion, sir. I left him ill at Martinsburg."

He looked at me more closely than he had yet done and held out his hand.

"I thank you, sir, for your diligence," he said, giving me a warm clasp. "You seem spent and tired yourself — you must need refreshment.

Nelly," he called, "come hither, you minx — you shall be punished for interrupting the reading of General Wayne's report by being forbidden to hear the rest of it. Take Lieutenant" —

"Randolph, sir," I said.

"Take Lieutenant Randolph to the supper-room and see that he is served. This is my daughter, Miss Custis," he added.

I bowed to the dark-eyed girl of sixteen who came floating forward, and followed her, I know not how, out into the hall and along it to the supper-room. I felt strangely weak and shaky, and could scarcely hold the glass of wine she brought me.

"Thank you," I said. "Pardon me if I seem awkward and confused, but I have had no such Ganymede since I left Riverview four years ago." I drained the glass at a draught and could feel the good wine running warm through my veins.

But she had swung round upon me with a white, startled face.

"Left where?" she cried.

"Riverview," I answered. "Colonel Stewart's estate on the Potomac. I thought perhaps you knew it."

"Know it! I do know it — as well as I know Mount Vernon. But I don't know" —

"Me? No, of course not. I was there so short a time, and you were at New York."

"That's not what I mean, sir," she retorted. "I did n't catch your name — tell me your name, sir, this instant!"

“Stewart Randolph, at your service, Miss Custis,” I said, and bowed low before her.

She sat down suddenly upon a chair, as though her legs had failed her, and I could see how she vainly tried to still the trembling of her hands by clenching them together in her lap.

“But they have thought you dead — these three years,” she said at last.

“Yes — I was taken captive by the Indians at the defeat of General St. Clair, and escaped just in time to join General Wayne’s legion.”

Still she sat looking at me, as though unable to believe her senses.

“Oh, Nelly!” cried a voice from the door. “Here have I been looking for you everywhere — never thinking of the supper-room!”

But Miss Custis had sprung from her chair, had flown to the door, had thrown her arms about one standing there, and was sobbing and laughing all in a breath.

“What is the matter, dear?” asked the voice. “What has happened?” She looked suddenly over the other’s shoulder and saw me staring at her. “Who” — she began, and stopped.

“Oh, can I tell you?” cried the girl. “Oh, dare I tell you? Can you bear it, dear?”

“Bear it? Bear what, Nelly?”

“Yes — I can’t keep it — come hither,” and she dragged the other into the room, all smiles and tears. The other — my heart gave a great leap as I looked at her, standing there in the light of the candles. “Who says the age of miracles is past?”

Here, my dear, is the courier who has brought us news of General Wayne's great victory. I know you will wish to meet him — Lieutenant Stewart Randolph !”

Her face went white ; she clutched at the table for support ; but I sprang to her and caught her in my arms — to my heart — as I had never held her — as I had never hoped to hold her.

“ Ruth,” I said. “ Dear Ruth ! It is no miracle — I should not have startled you so, but I did not know ” —

“ There !” cried Miss Custis. “ Blame a woman ! That has been man's way since Adam ! ”

“ And Frederic,” I hurried on, lest I forget, lest my courage fail, — “ and Frederic came with me, too, dear Ruth ; wounded, he came with me, he burnt so to get back to Riverview and to the dear people there — to one especially. He fell ill at Martinsburg — he could come no farther and he made me leave him.”

The color had swept back to her face, and she released herself gently from my arms and stood from me. Oh, what a glory she was to God's handiwork ! I had left her a girl and I found her a woman — red blood, warm heart ! If I had loved her then, how would I love her now !

“ *He* left you once !” she said, her dark eyes full of scorn.

In a flash I saw it all — all I had not guessed, that Frederic had not told me.

“ He never left me !” I cried warmly. “ If you had seen that rout — how could he know ? He

had other duties — he was in the van where the general had placed him! And he would have thrown his life away in the attempt to rescue me but that the general interfered!”

“Well, let us not quarrel in this first moment, cousin,” she said a little wearily. “It seems to me that we were always quarreling while you were at Riverview. And I have blamed myself” —

“No, no!” I protested. “It was I who was to blame! I was a churlish, quick-tempered boy! Only,” I added, “you must pardon Frederic, dear cousin. To blame him is so absurd — so unjust — so unlike you! Besides, now that I have come safe out of it, there is nothing to blame him for.”

“No,” she said with a little smile, “I must certainly forgive him.”

“But I shall not!” cried Nelly Custis, with a storm in her eyes and on her brow that astonished me. “I shall not — I think him odious!” and she flung out of the room.

“Why,” I began, when I could get my breath. “Why, heavens and earth, she has never even met him!”

But in her stormy passage along the hall she had left some word of my presence, for I heard a rush of steps, and Colonel Stewart himself burst into the room and took me in his arms as he might have taken a child.

“Oh, but this will be good news to Chris and Margaret!” he cried. “Do you hear, Ruth, we start back to-morrow.”

“They are not here, then?” I asked.

"No, they are at Belterre, just south of River-view, — an estate I had the good fortune to secure some three years ago, and which your father has been managing for me. That was a sad time, my boy, when Frederic's letter came saying that you were dead and accusing himself."

"I know," I said. "You must have seen, sir, how absurd that accusation was."

"I did," said the colonel. "I remembered Braddock's field — but who can reason with a woman — especially such a willful one as this?" and he pinched Ruth's ear. "But what a big fellow you have grown," he added, holding me off to look at me. "Clear-eyed, clean-skinned, brown as a berry — why, I protest, those three years with the savages did you no harm, my boy."

"No," I said. "They did me much good, I think."

"Is n't he good to look at, Ruth?" he cried, but Ruth laughed and ran away without answering. "The little girl took it much to heart," he added more gravely, "when she thought you dead. She was always teasing you, you know; I think she has quite got over that. So you were three years with the savages!"

"Three years! I must tell you about it, sir."

"So you shall; and not me only, this very night. First, you must get some refreshment, for the President and some of the others are coming to hear your story. A more distinguished audience than most men have, my boy."

He sat down beside me at the table, and while I

ate and drank, told me such news as he thought would most interest me — of the estate, of father and mother. And presently came the President himself, breaking, for once, his rule of retiring at nine. Never was man who had less need of adornment, — as I had seen once before, — and he was dressed now, quite simply, in a suit of dark silk velvet of the old cut I knew so well from having seen Mr. Harrison and Colonel Stewart wear it, with a silver-hilted small-sword at his side. He wore his hair full-powdered, with black silk rose and bag, and carried himself with a dignity and grace quite beyond describing. He brought with him General Knox, and Mr. Lear, his secretary, and Mr. Robert Morris, who was anxious to hear some news of his “scapegrace ward;” my own cousin, Mr. Edmund Randolph, now risen to a high place in the councils of the state, and some two or three others whom I do not remember. And after some little hesitancy and stumbling at the first, I told my story. It was to the President I told it, — I soon forgot the presence of the rest, — and his calm, clear, honest eyes encouraged me and held me up and bore me on, until I really think that I told it not half badly. Nor could I refrain from dwelling at some length upon the difficulties that had lain in the way of General St. Clair.

“We have all realized our errors in that matter, sir,” said the President quietly, “and it may interest you to know that he has had full justice done him. The Congress made a thorough investigation

of the whole campaign, and acquitted him absolutely and with honor from being in any way to blame for the defeat."

I tried to tell him how this news rejoiced me, but stammered and broke down.

" 'T is plain to see that his officers loved him," he said kindly. "Continue, sir."

So I took up the thread of my tale again, — my capture, my escape, the battle, — and they listened quietly enough, but when I came to the account of the correspondence between our general and Major Campbell they burst into roars of laughter.

"That is Mad Anthony all over!" cried General Knox. "To ride straight up to the mouths of the British cannon! A toast to him — to the dearest, fieriest old warrior that survives the Revolution!"

They drank it with a cheer, and I went on with my story, — the burning of the Indian towns, the return to Fort Defiance, the journey homeward through the wilderness.

"What was the name of your companion?" asked the President?"

"Captain Frederic Rohlman, sir."

"And you say you left him at Martinsburg — what was the nature of his disorder?"

"Why, sir," I said, stammering a little, "he had a sword-thrust through his side. We thought it healed, but he fell from his horse and opened it again."

"A sword-thrust!" said the President quickly. "A strange wound surely, to receive in a battle with the Indians!"

His steady eyes were looking at me and I could not evade.

"'T was not received in the battle, sir," I said, and so told him of the challenge and the duel, and of the causes that led up to them. He heard me to the end without comment, though with glowing eyes, then turned to General Knox with a smile.

"You see, sir, there has another generation of warriors grown up since our day," he said. "By the way, Mr. Morris, General Wayne mentions your ward very particularly in his dispatches. He seems to have, at last, found his true vocation."

"I am very glad to hear it," responded Mr. Morris a little dryly, and, I think, despite the events of after days, he was never quite reconciled to Harry's choice.

"Before we say good-night, gentlemen," said the President, rising, "I have a toast to propose." We rose with him and filled our glasses. "We drink to our gallant soldiers in the west, and especially to those two who have brought us through the wilderness news of victory!"

CHAPTER XXXI

“JOURNEYS END” . . .

COUSIN RUTH was staying with Nelly Custis at the President's house, but Colonel Stewart was the guest of Mr. Morris, whose residence was but a step away at the corner of Sixth and High. Thither we went, and there I awoke at dawn, refreshed and spirited. There seemed to be no one stirring in the house, so I lay still where I was, my brain busy with the happenings of the previous night. Of the whole evening, one moment stood out above all the rest, — the moment when Ruth had lain within my arms, against my heart, — it set me a-tremble again to think of it! Well, it was something to have held her so, if only for a moment, since the hour was at hand when another and stronger one would claim her. Oh, how I could have loved her, were she mine to love! — how cherished her . . .

Plainly, there was safety and content for me only in flight, and my thoughts turned longingly to the west, to the wilderness, where there was work to keep a man busy and free from the pangs of memory.

I arose at last, very unsteady and miserable in mind, longing for some haven to cast anchor in,

and went down to the floor below. A servant, busily engaged in dusting the hall, looked at me with an air of surprise, and in response to my inquiry said that neither Colonel Stewart nor Mr. Morris had as yet come down. He showed me into the bright morning-room and brought me a fresh, damp copy of "Poulson's Advertiser." Its principal item was an account of General Wayne's victory, which was given with as much circumstance as the late arrival of the news permitted. The Congress had not yet begun its session, and I found nothing else in the paper to interest me, so laid it down and sat looking out upon the street. As I sat so, Mrs. Morris, a beautiful and kindly lady, came in to me, and presently her husband and Colonel Stewart also.

"That is youth!" he laughed, when he learned that I had been up for some two hours. "A long day in the saddle, yet up again at dawn, fresh as ever! You and I were young once, Morris; but we love our beds, now. I protest that I should be in mine yet but that we must make an early start."

Breakfast was awaiting us, and during the meal a message from the President came for Colonel Stewart, who smiled as he read it.

"We are to have a companion, it seems," he said. "That madcap Nelly Custis has, of a sudden, grown weary of Philadelphia, and has decided to come with Ruth to Riverview. Well, we shall be glad to have her. She is the one person, I think," he added, turning to our host, "who stands

in no awe of the President — and how he loves her !”

“As though she were his very daughter,” said Mr. Morris. “What is it, Sam ?” he asked of the servant who appeared at the door and stood hesitating on the threshold.

“A caller for Lieutenant Randolph, sir,” and he handed me a card upon which a name was written in penmanship of unusual beauty.

One glance at it brought the glad blood to my face.

“Why, ’t is General St. Clair !” I cried.

“General St. Clair !” — echoed Mr. Morris. “Show him up at once, Sam ! I think we will have another bottle, my dear,” he added to his wife.

It was the same kindly, gallant gentleman whom I found myself greeting, and who presently sat down with us — grayer, perhaps, with new lines in his face which trial and disappointment had graven there ; but with spirit as buoyant and eye as bright.

“I arrived from New York late last night,” he explained, “and found the town ringing with the great news. This morning I learned the name of the courier, and must seek him out at once. You can’t know how it pleases me, sir, to find you alive and well. You must tell me the story.”

And so for the third — or is it the fourth ? — time in this history, I rehearsed the tale of my adventures.

“It was well done,” said the general, breathing

a deep sigh when I had ended. "It was well done! General Wayne was the man for the task," and there was no trace of malice or of envy in his tone. "I have a letter here," he added, "which may interest you. You remember M. de Malar-tie?"

"Remember him, sir! He was a very dear friend of mine!"

"Well, the letter is from him, and he asks to be remembered particularly to you and to your brother. He returned to Europe after the campaign to find his fortune lost and his family either dead on the guillotine or in prison. He joined the French exiles at Coblenz, and has been fighting since that time in the Austrian and Prussian armies, his duty calling him, as he says, 'to avenge the best of kings.' He adds that he hopes one day to return to America."

We drank his health and General Wayne's, and, after a few moments, parted, my old commander to return to the trials of his government, greater in peace than they had ever been in war. And we said good-by to Mr. Morris and to his wife, and betook ourselves to the President's house. We found that Mistress Nelly's furbelows were not yet quite packed, and while we waited, Ruth took me for a walk through the garden back of the house, which was beautifully laid out and extended through to Minor Street, where the President's stables were. She was quite her old self again, quick-witted and ready of tongue; but I — I could only look at her and wonder at her beauty

and curse my own ill fortune, and resolve to be off to the west away from danger — until my wits were hopelessly fuddled. After a time Miss Custis came out, too, and launched divers shafts at me, which quite failed to pierce the tumult of my thoughts, though sharply pointed and shrewdly aimed. And then, to my great relief, the coach drove up, good-bys were said, I mounted my horse, and we were off.

Of the journey to Riverview I have little recollection. I know only that I jogged along behind the coach, trying to adjust myself again with the world and finding the task no light one. Ruth and Miss Custis made some tentative efforts to draw me out, but after the first day, finding me fretful and unresponsive, left me to myself. Even the good colonel soon abandoned me, and devoted himself to the more cheerful company in the coach. At Riverview the dear ones were awaiting us, — what need to describe the meeting? — and there was Frederic, too, very pale and weak, but quite cheerful. The wound was better, it seemed, and he had left his bed, against the protests of his doctor, and come down the river in a freight boat as far as the falls, where he had found another boat to carry him on to Alexandria. There Mr. Dodds had met him and brought him home.

I saw his pale face flush as Ruth greeted him, and presently I bore Miss Custis away into the garden, leaving them alone together. She was silent for a while as we loitered up and down the walks, which fell in well enough with my mood ;

but though she affected to be looking at the flowers, I could see her glancing curiously at me from time to time.

"I spoke hastily of Captain Rohlman," she said at last. "I have a habit of speaking hastily. I think him fine."

"That is the word," I said. "Fine. Every one must think so who really knows him."

"And I have heard the story of the duel," she went on. "That was splendid, too, I think."

"Yes," I said. "It was splendid."

"And he has been very good to you?" she asked.

"I can't tell you how good. He came into my life just at the moment I was beginning to feel my loneliness—he and Harry Harrison—I never had a brother or sister, you know; and he has been always a strong, loving elder brother, upon whom I could utterly rely."

She said nothing for a time, only tore to pieces slowly a rose that she had picked.

"I begin to see," she said at last. "I have spoken hastily to you, also, Mr. Randolph; pray forget it."

"Why," I protested, "I have no memory of it!"

"In the garden that afternoon. Don't tell me you have forgotten!" she cried, seeing my blank face.

"Really," I began.

"You have, you have!" and she clapped her hands. "See, I have been remorseful for nothing. My conscience is surely growing over-

sensitive. I think yours is over-sensitive, Mr. Randolph.”

I looked down at her, suspecting that she was jesting again, but she returned my gaze quite seriously.

“And how would you remedy it, Miss Custis?” I asked.

“I would n’t think about it so much,” she said. “I would not be always accusing myself of selfishness and I know not what beside. Of course we are selfish — all of us — ’t is human nature. Each of us has rights, Mr. Randolph, which we are bound to assert, even though some one else be injured. One of these is the right to be happy.”

I could not see whither her talk was tending, and gazed down at her helplessly.

“Only men are so very dense,” she added with a spice of irony, as she caught my look. “’T is a wonder to me they ever get anywhere! There was that crowd at Philadelphia which was always pursuing Ruth.”

“Crowd!” I cried.

“Ay — crowd! Do you think yourself the only one, sir, who can see how beautiful she is? Some of them were desperately in love, and I warrant you, each of them thought only of how to get her for himself.”

Well, after all, there was nothing surprising about this, I told myself — nothing to occasion any alarm. Which of them could compare to Frederic?

But Miss Custis was weary of the game.

"You would better go back to your brother, sir," she said, with meaning. "No doubt he needs you."

So I went slowly back to the house and up the stair to Frederic's room, where I found him alone, lying back, very tired and wan, in the great chair that had been fixed for him before the window. He turned his face to me with a little thin smile as I entered, and gave me his hand.

There was no need that I should question him — he had thrown and lost — that was writ large in his eyes — and I sat down beside him, my heart aflame against the woman who had used him so. He seemed so weak and spiritless, so changed since an hour before, that I made no effort to draw him into talk. Colonel Stewart came past the door, and seeing me there, went on. An hour passed, and I sat quietly holding his hand until at last he closed his eyes and dropped asleep from sheer exhaustion. Then, calling Pomp to take my place, I went out again into the open air, for the house seemed to choke me. And there, in the garden, I came upon her, talking with Nelly Custis, as though she had not just struck a brave man through the heart.

I would have turned back when I saw them standing there, but Miss Custis called to me and I could not but obey.

"I implore your aid," she cried, and added as she looked at me, "O Knight of the Rueful Countenance! I have a grave affair ahead, where it behooves me to tread carefully."

"What is the affair?" I asked with little interest.

"An affair of the heart," she laughed, "between two" — but Ruth clapped a hand across her mouth and silenced her.

"No," I said coldly. "I fear you must do without my aid, Miss Custis. The only affair of that kind in which I ever intermeddled has just ended to my bitter disappointment."

I did not glance at Ruth, but I could see how she clung to her companion, and I gloried in the thought that I had struck home. Something in her attitude reproached me with cruelty, — with injustice, — but I shut my heart to it, and started to pass on.

"Oh, Mr. Randolph," called Miss Custis after me.

"Yes?" and I stopped, but without turning, suspecting some new gibe.

"Do you ever read your Bible?"

"Occasionally."

"Well, the next time you take it down, turn to second Samuel, the twelfth chapter and the seventh verse. Read the first sentence two or three times, until you are quite certain you understand it — quite certain, remember!"

I strode away angrily, — I was in no mood for jesting, — and went for a long walk along the river.

Frederic rallied somewhat in the afternoon, and I went again to sit with him. Doctor Harden had

come over from Alexandria, and I helped him dress the wound, which was again inflamed and swollen.

"It is doing fairly well," he said, "only there is a fever which worries me somewhat, and a general lassitude which I do not quite understand. The fever must be watched closely, and we must stop this inflammation. I will stay here the night in case it should grow worse."

The rector of Quantico church, Mr. Thomas Harrison, who had clung to his charge despite the disestablishment, sustained, I suspect, very largely by Colonel Stewart, had also driven over to welcome his patron home, and spent a portion of the afternoon with Frederic and me. He was a good man enough, doubtless, but a dull and unimaginative one, and I was sincerely glad when he arose to go. He had some other pastoral calls to pay in the neighborhood, he explained, and would be back to Riverview to spend the night. I sent Pomp away, too, telling him I would call him when I needed him.

For a time neither of us spoke, but as I felt how feverish his hands were, and noted, for the hundredth time, his weakness, my anger overmastered me.

"It was heartless!" I blurted out. "It was base!"

But he stopped me with a look.

"Not that, Stewart," he said. "Not that at all! Only she does not love me. She was brave enough and wise enough to tell me so quite plainly.

So it is not in the least her fault — I would not have her without love."

"But this is nonsense, dear Frederic!" I protested. "Why should she not love you — unless" . . .

I stopped — the very thought of it seemed to freeze my heart. Oh, I could not give her to another!

"Unless she loves some one else," said Frederic quietly. "I have thought of that, dear Stewart; but I know not who. Perhaps at Philadelphia she met some one" . . .

That was the solution.

"Miss Custis told me she was much admired there," I said bitterly. "Doubtless that was the love affair she wanted me to hasten."

"Wanted you to hasten?" repeated Frederic quickly.

"Yes, — I met her in the garden after I left you, — her and Ruth. I told her I would never meddle in another."

"And what did she answer you, Stewart?"

He was looking at me strangely, intently.

"Oh, with some gibe about reading my Bible," I answered impatiently. "She is always jesting."

"Yes, — but what did she say?" persisted Frederic.

"She told me to read some verse — in Samuel, I think."

"Try to remember it, Stewart."

It was said so earnestly that I looked at him, surprised, half suspecting, that the delirium was

back again. But he seemed quite calm, only his eyes were gleaming strangely.

"It was in Samuel," I said, striving at recollection. "In second Samuel — ah, I remember — the twelfth chapter and the seventh verse" — she said to read the first sentence till I was sure I understood it."

"Let me have my Bible," he said. "It is there on the shelf at my bed-head."

I got it for him, and watched him as he turned quickly to the place. I saw his eyes run along the lines, and then he lifted them to me with such joy in them, such love . . .

"Stewart!" he cried. "God bless you!"

And he held out the book for me to see. Dazzled, trembling, only half understanding, for a moment I could not see the page, then the words stood out clear before me: —

"And Nathan said to David, 'Thou art the man!'"

He cast the book upon the floor, and held out both hands to me.

"Can you forgive me, dear brother?" he cried. "I have been so blind; so selfish!"

"Blind! Selfish! It is I who have been that, Frederic!"

"You? Yes, you have been blind enough; but our eyes are opened now! Do you love her, Stewart?"

Love her! Oh . . . What could I say — only look into his eyes and cling to his hands.

"Then go to her, Stewart! Go to her and tell her."

“I cannot!” I cried, my face covered with my hands. “I dare not!”

“She may be awaiting you,” he said. “Think of her there in the garden awaiting you!”

“But you,” I began.

“I shall joy in your happiness. With all my heart I shall rejoice in it. Go!”

And, stumbling, blinded, dazed with joy, I went — down the stair — out into the garden . . .

CHAPTER XXXII

. . . "IN LOVERS MEETING"

LONG before I came to her I saw her sitting in the bower at the garden-end, gazing out across the vineyard. Her chin was in her hand, and though her face was turned from me, there was in her attitude a dreariness, a loneliness, that brought quick tears to my eyes. She did not hear me until I had come quite near; then she looked around and rose slowly to her feet with face aflame.

How should I begin? I could only stand and look at her with warm love in my eyes.

"Sweetheart," I said at last; and as though the word had unlocked the fountains of her heart, I saw her eyes brim with tears; she held out her hands to me; and again she was in my arms close against my heart — and mine the right to hold her there, ever and ever!

"Oh, but I have loved you!" I whispered, kissing the ear, half hidden in her curls. "Oh, the years and years! But I thought" . . .

"Yes, I know, dear Stewart. Oh, you were very blind, dear!"

"I measured myself with him," I said, "and saw my own unworthiness."

But she placed her fingers on my lips with a little mock frown of anger.

"No more of that, sir!" she cried. "I will not have it!"

I kissed the fingers, and we sat down together on the bench — close, close!

"And you made me, oh! so jealous, sir, many times!" she laughed. "There was Suzanne — you were quite foolish about her, you know!"

"Yes," I assented, "I have been a fool many times in my life, sweetheart. Only yesterday I had resolved to go back to the wilderness."

"Yes; I suspected it."

"Suspected it?"

"I am not blind, sir; I have suspected many things. I think I should have died had I not suspected" . . .

"That I loved you, Ruth?"

She nodded, and looked up at me with brimming eyes. What a blind fool I had been!

"But I did not suspect," I said. "I told you once before that I was stupid, sweetheart; remember, I have warned you!"

"Oh, but I would not let you suspect, dear Stewart; I was always on guard, while you" . . .

I kissed her on lips and eyes; my blood was singing with the thought, "She is mine, mine, mine; now and ever, she is mine!" Over and over, over and over, "She is mine! This wonderful, beautiful, worshipful woman is mine!" I had thought myself in hell, and here were the gates of heaven open!

"But that you should love me!" I said. "That is the wonder, sweetheart!"

"And what is so wonderful about it, Stewart?"

"Why, what am I? And Nelly Custis told me of the men who fell into your train at Philadelphia!"

"Nelly Custis is a minx!" she cried. "Do you know, sir, it was all on your account she came home with me."

"Heaven bless her! But for her I should still be walking in darkness, Ruth! Such a terrible darkness! I was too stupid to find my own way out."

"Stupid! But you are not, Stewart! Shall I tell you what you are?"

"What am I, dear?"

"You are the man I love!" she said, and crowned me as no king was ever crowned.

We went forth presently from the garden, hand in hand.

"I have something to show you," she said, and led me toward the river.

Evening was at hand, and little clouds of mist were steaming up from the water.

"It is here," she said, and led me to the seat between the two tall oaks. "Do you remember, dear, sitting here once with me, and you found on the arm of the seat there the little love-token my mother had cut when her lover was away in the west?"

"Do you think I could forget, sweetheart?"

"And I read in your eyes what you dared not say outright. Well, see, on this other arm."

I bent and saw, cut in the wood, an R and an S, encircled by a heart.

"They were such hard letters to cut, Stewart," she said. "And how I labored at them! If you had found them, do you think you would have known?"

"I don't know, my dear," I said; "but I know now, and I am very happy," and I bent and kissed them.

"And now," she said at last, "we must tell the others — father first of all."

We found him in his office, a lighted candle on either side, going over some accounts. We stopped upon the threshold, my arm about her, and something in our look caused him to snatch off his spectacles and lean suddenly back in his chair.

"Why," he began, "why" . . .

"Colonel Stewart," I faltered, feeling my knees of a sudden growing weak beneath me, "Ruth has consented to be my wife, and — and — we love each other very much!"

Ruth loosed my arm and flew to him, and threw her arms about him.

"Very, very much, dear father!" she cried.

He drew her down upon his knee with a great light in his face; and I went blindly to him, and he took us both into his arms, to that generous, tender heart. His eyes were bright with tears as he looked down at us, and from the movement of his lips, I knew that he was praying.

"I must go up to Frederic," I said at last. "I left him alone" —

"Alone?" repeated the colonel, suddenly grave.

"He sent me away — to Ruth," I said, but not till that instant did I realize how the time had flown.

"We thought you were with him. Pomp said you would call him when you wanted" . . .

But I waited to hear no more. With a great fear at my heart I sprang up the stair to Frederic's room. His chair was empty. I plucked back the curtains from the bed to find it empty, too. The fire had died away, and the room was so dark I stumbled twice around it before I was convinced that there was no one there.

"He is not here!" I cried to Colonel Stewart, and in a moment they all came swarming up, pale-faced, armed with candles.

We ran up and down the hall — we flung open doors — we searched — he could not have gone far . . .

"Here!" cried Ruth suddenly. "Here!"

He was in her room half lying on the window-seat. He seemed gazing out over the garden — at the bower where we had sat! — but when I raised his head I found his eyes were closed.

They took him from me — they bore him to his room — and I went blindly out into the night, like Cain, to fling myself face downward on the grass and curse myself.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AND LAST

How long a time went by I know not — I was in an abyss of woe so black that night and day had been alike to me, but at last I heard a voice calling, — a voice that reached me even in hell.

“Stewart!” she called; and again, “Stewart!”

Had it been any other, I had crawled away and hid somewhere — but she — my whole soul turned to her for comfort.

“Stewart!”

“Yes, dear Ruth!”

She came to me quickly across the grass and sat down beside me and flung her arms about me.

“Oh, my dear,” she cried, “you must be brave! You can be brave, I know, sweetheart!”

“But a murderer, Ruth!” I groaned. “My brother’s slayer!” and I felt across my brow, certain, almost, that God had set his mark there.

“Not that!” she cried, and held me close. “Not that, dear heart! He is asking for you, Stewart.”

“Asking for me? He is not dead, then?”

Oh, what a weight was lifted from heart and brain!

“He is not dead, then, Ruth?”

"No," she said, "not dead."

But there was something in her voice that bound the chains again about me.

"And he is asking for you, Stewart. You must go to him at once."

"Yes, at once!" I said, and struggled to my feet.

She led me up the steps — along the hall — to the door.

"Frederic!"

He was lying back among the pillows smiling up at me — the others were all there, but I saw only him — smiling up at me, the light in his face, the joy!

"Dear boy!"

I flung myself down beside the bed and seized his hand and covered it with the bitterest tears I ever wept.

"Dear boy! And it is well with you?"

I knew what he meant —

"Well — yes. But with you — oh, Frederic!"

"It is well with me, also, Stewart," he said gently. "Oh, but I have been glad this day! I saw — from the window — I knew you would not care if I looked on!"

"Care!"

"But there was one thing more I hoped to look upon before" —

He paused a moment, and I looked up at him — at the shining eyes —

"Perhaps," he said hesitatingly, "I might, even yet — but it is much to ask, Stewart."

“Ask it, Frederic.”

“If I might see my brother wedded,” he said softly, “see him safe home at last — anchored” —

Oh, what a little thing. And I would have torn out my heart for him!

“You shall see it!” I cried. “Ruth!”

“Yes, dear.”

“You heard?”

“Yes, I heard,” and she came and stood beside me.

“And you consent?”

“If you wish it, Stewart.”

“I do wish it,” I said. “Mr. Harrison is here?”

“Yes.”

“And you are ready?”

“Quite ready, dearest.”

In how many other crises of my life have I found her quite ready — a staff to lean upon!

“Colonel Stewart,” I said, turning to him, “you will not refuse, I know?” But I had only to look into his face to read his answer.

“No,” he said, “I will not refuse. ’Tis somewhat irregular,” he added, turning to Mr. Harrison, “but I am sure you will see the pressing nature of the case, sir.”

“I do,” said Mr. Harrison, and came and stood before us; but his voice was trembling as he began.

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here together in the sight of God” . . .

I scarcely heard the words — I could only look down into those smiling eyes.

“Wilt thou have this woman . . . wilt thou love her” . . .

“Oh, yes ; dearest Ruth !”

Only the smiling eyes and the joyous face !

He put her hand in mine, and I stumbled after him through a broad waste of words. Moments passed — he was praying. I had her hand again.

“Those whom God hath joined” . . .

Only the smiling lips — the peaceful face — peaceful !

“Oh, Frederic, Frederic !”

My arms were about him, my heart to his . . .

But my dearest one bent over me and drew me away softly, tenderly, to the shelter of her breast. For Frederic was not there.

The Riverside Press

Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.

Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.

SEP 10 1902

SEP 10 1902

1 COPY DEL. TO CAT. DIV.

SEP. 10 1902

SEP. 15 1902

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00023121657

